MAKE IT

OWN IT

ROCK IT

Buffi Jashanmal

Buffi's DRESS DESIGN

SEW 30 FUN STYLES

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Storey Publishing

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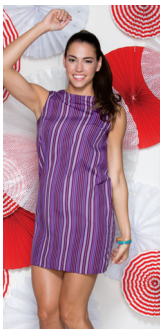


CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

CHAPTER 1

Fabrics and Tools 7

CHAPTER 2

Slopers, Patterns, and Muslins . . .29

CHAPTER 3

The Shift Dress 62

CHAPTER 4

The Sheath Dress 100

CHAPTER 5

The Princess Seam Dress 136

CHAPTER 6

Vintage Transformation 170

ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY 178

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 196

INDEX 197

SLOPER PIECES 200

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wished you could sit down with a dress designer and learn her secrets? Well, now's your chance! I've been designing clothes for 10 years, and I teach classes in how to sew creatively. In this book, I'll share what I know about basic patternmaking and sewing techniques. I'll do my best to make this easy for you, and throw in designer and industry knowledge to back up the process. Even if you are totally new to sewing, fear not. You will learn how to make great wearable pieces that are totally unique, with customizing and styling tips throughout the book to keep you inspired and thinking for yourself. Here's a rundown of what's waiting for you:

CHAPTER 1: Fabrics and Tools

It doesn't matter if you don't know warp from weft; all will be explained here. Plus, I'll give you some suggestions for fabrics that are fun to work with, so fabric shopping isn't quite so overwhelming. And while you're browsing the store, check out the materials that are listed in this chapter. Once you're stocked up on the right tools, you'll be able to tackle the projects with ease. Have a good read through this section and get familiar with your new best friends!

CHAPTER 2: Slopers, Patterns, and Muslins

This section is your foundation for the whole dressmaking process. Be sure to fill in the size charts on page 37 with your measurements, and keep a copy with your sewing tools. You can compare your specs against the measurements of the slopers in the back of this book, and from there see if you want to make any alterations. With clear information on slopers, patterns, and drafts, you'll easily be able to follow the patternmaking instructions. Here is where you will learn how to adjust the slopers provided to create a custom fit.

CHAPTERS 3, 4 AND 5: Buffi's Dresses

These three chapters each use a different but very basic dress template, known as a sloper. I'll teach you to manipulate the slopers to make various dresses using that one silhouette. The three slopers included in this book are all timeless and extremely useful for all your dressmaking needs. They include:

- the shift dress
- the sheath dress
- the princess seam dress

Each dress is broken up into three basic variations, with guidelines on each sloper to show you where to cut for each variation. These are:

- set-in sleeve
- raglan sleeve
- strapless

And guess what? Each of those three variations has three options:

- **MAKE IT.** Learn the basics and make your sloper with basic sewing and apply new patternmaking skills.
- **OWN IT.** Play with these simple yet totally effective customizing skills.
- **ROCK IT.** Take patternmaking and sewing to the next level; for those who already have sewing and patternmaking experience, or for those who have learned the basics by making the simpler versions of each dress.

Are you counting? That makes nine dresses for each sloper, for a total of 27 dress projects plus three bonus projects in chapter 6. Whatever your level of experience, you'll find ideas for something new and inspiring to sew for yourself!

CHAPTER 6: Vintage Transformation

This is where you take what you've learned and apply it to remake vintage clothing. Once you have the basic skills, it's so easy to take something you've found in a thrift store and adapt it into something fab! We are all about going green these days, so don't just *buy* vintage, make it your own! There is something hugely satisfying about having reworked a garment.

Illustrated Glossary

Don't miss out on this gem! If you have never touched a sewing machine (maybe yours is still in the box under the stairs), take it out, dust it off, and get ready to learn skills that will serve you for life. All the basics are covered here, including making bias tape, installing zippers, and finishing raw edges. You'll be making dresses in no time at all! If you're already experienced, this section can serve as a reminder for any techniques where you feel a bit rusty.

Slopers

All the slopers that you need are supplied in the pattern folder, sized from XS to XL. It is best to keep these sloper pages intact, so don't cut them; follow the instructions in chapter 2 for customizing them as needed and tracing them onto cardstock. Since each sloper piece has three sleeve options — set-in, raglan, and strapless — some of the tops have been separated from the bottoms of the slopers to avoid too many overlapping lines. Follow the marks on the slopers to match up and trace the correct sleeve version for the project you are making.

CHAPTER 1

FABRICS AND TOOLS

With such a huge variety of fabrics to choose from, it's important to go into stores with an idea of what you are looking for. Otherwise it can be a real challenge to decide what to buy. As much as I love fabric shopping, I have spent many wasted hours wandering around expecting the perfect fabric to jump right out at me, but with so many options, it can be overwhelming. Read through this chapter and make a list of the fabrics, notions, and tools you need. Always check your patterns and the cutting information so you know how much yardage to buy. I usually make a complete list that reads, "Fabric 1 : 1½ yards, Fabric 2: 2½ yards, interfacing, 7" zipper," and so on. Then it's time to go shopping — and let the fun begin!

Fabric Savvy

In my sewing classes, I always encourage my students to choose their own fabric. So, even though I'll tell you the type of fabric I used to make each dress featured in this book, feel free to use something completely different. There are definitely no rules when it comes to designing, so have fun choosing your fabrics. For beginners, though, I suggest you start with medium-weight woven fabrics, which are far easier to cut and control with a sewing machine than shiny, slippery fabrics. As beautiful as they are, silks and satins are especially tricky to cut and machine-stitch.

Obviously, the fabric you use will have a huge effect on how a dress turns out. For instance, sewing with silk takes some experience, but it will create a totally different look than, say, sewing with medium-weight cotton. It's a good idea to go through your wardrobe and study what you have. Take a look at your dresses and get familiar with how they are made. What fabric is used and why? Are most of your dresses casual or are they more suited for work or special occasions? Check inside the garment and see how the seams have been finished. Have any seams been serged? Is there a lining, or even a French seam? You can learn a lot by looking. Then read on and learn how to make your own fabulous dresses.

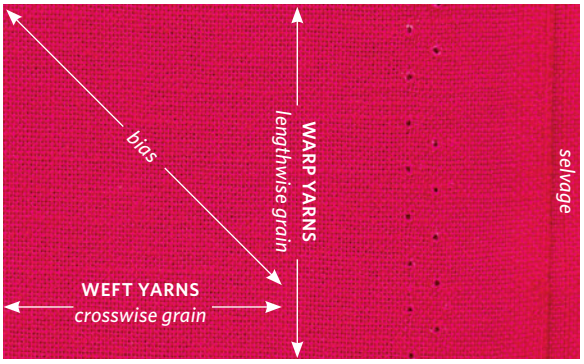
Wovens

In this book, we work with woven fabrics (as opposed to knits) to make a variety of dresses from summer frocks to evening wear. You can create something casual, cute, funky, or super comfortable (my favorite)! Having a dress for every occasion is almost like having a costume for each situation life brings you. I say dress up and have fun!

Having worked with woven fabrics for a long time, I feel most comfortable making dresses out of them. Working with knits requires different patterns and slopers, and that's a whole other book! So let's take one step at a time. For a beginning designer and sewer, deciding to work with woven fabric, with a general understanding of some useful terms, is the best way to start.

Weft, Warp, and Grainline

Woven fabrics are made up of *warp* and *weft* yarns or threads. The warp threads are the first to go on the loom and are secured tightly; they go down the length of the loom and become the *lengthwise* or *straight grain* of the fabric. The weft threads are then woven back and forth across the width of the fabric, to become the *crosswise grain* of the fabric. The *selvages,* which run along two sides of the fabric, are where the wefts form a non-fraying edge. The *bias* is the 45-degree diagonal to the straight grain.



When you're ready to cut out a pattern, you can lay it out on the fabric in one of three directions: on the lengthwise grain, on the crosswise grain, or on the bias. The way you cut out the fabric will affect how the garment will hang on your body. Most patterns are cut so the length of the garment (from neck to hem) aligns with the lengthwise grain (parallel to the selvage) because this is the strongest grain with the least amount of stretch.

The crosswise grain runs perpendicular to the selvage and also has little or no stretch. Most large dress pattern pieces, such as the front, back, and sleeves, are cut on the lengthwise (straight) grain, but small pieces like straps or pockets can be cut on the crosswise grain. A pattern cut on the bias will have the most drape and the most stretch. The front opening of *All Wrapped Up* (see page 120) is cut on the bias. Bias tape keeps the front opening of this dress lying flat against the body and prevents gravity from stretching it out.

You want to cut larger pieces on the same grain to make sure everything hangs in the same way; otherwise, your design could be compromised. So, when you lay out your patterns, check to make sure the grainline arrows (see page 57) on the pattern line up with the correct grain of the fabric (the lengthwise grain, unless stated otherwise).

TYPES OF WOVEN FABRICS

PLAIN WEAVE. The warp and weft threads criss-cross back and forth both horizontally and vertically in a one-over and one-under pattern. We are able to cut into the fabric and tear the fabric straight across the grainline.

SATIN WEAVE. The warp yarns "float" over several weft yarns, creating a smooth surface and a glossy or luxurious sheen to the finished fabric. As a variation, the weft yarns can float over the warp yarns, producing a fabric called sateen. It is not possible to tear the fabric straight across the grainline like we can with plain-weave fabrics.

TWILL WEAVE. The weft and warp crossings are offset to create a diagonal pattern on the fabric surface. Due to the weave, it is not possible to tear the fabric across one yarn.

Straightening the Grain

When the warp and weft threads are perpendicular, the fabric is said to be "on grain." It's important for the fabric to be on grain for the dress to hang as intended. To check if your fabric is on grain, fold the fabric in half so the selvages align, and if the cut (or torn) edges line up exactly, the fabric is on grain. If the fabric is off grain, follow the steps below to straighten the grain.

First you have to make sure the cut ends follow a crosswise thread. You can carefully cut across one crosswise thread (twill and satin weave fabrics), or use a quick trick (steps 1 and 2) if you are working with plain-weave fabrics. Once the cut (or torn) edge follows a crosswise grain, follow steps 3–6 to straighten the grain.

1 **MAKE** a small cut into the selvage in the direction of the crosswise grain.

2 **HOLD** the fabric on both sides of the cut, and just rip the fabric until you reach the other end. The edge of the fabric is now exactly on the straight crosswise grain. The fabric will probably be distorted, so you'll need to work with it a bit, as follows.

3 **IRON** your fabric so it is smooth and flat.

4 **LAY** your fabric flat on a clean smooth surface.

5 **FOLD** the fabric along the crosswise grain and see if the torn (or cut) edges line up exactly. If they don't, your fabric is off grain and you should proceed to step 6. If the edges do line up, you are ready to lay out your pattern pieces.

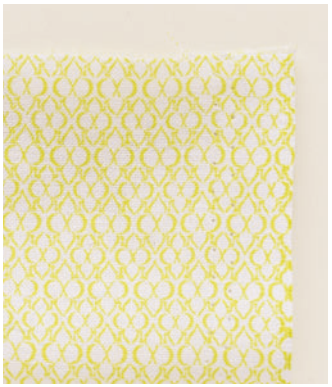
6 **PULL** the fabric gently from the corners until right angles are formed, the cut or torn edges align, and the fabric lies flat on grain.

making the cut

ripping the fabric

off grain

on grain



Everyday Fibers

There is a huge variety of fabrics made of both natural and synthetic fibers. Most of the dresses in this book are made of cotton and linen fabrics, with some synthetic blends. Fabrics behave differently depending on their fiber content and weave; therefore, you need to treat them differently. Always check the fabric bolt for manufacturer's care instructions. Some fabrics shrink when washed, so play it safe and wash them before you cut out your pattern.

Cottons

Cotton is a natural fiber made from the seedpods of the cotton plant. The longer the original fiber length, the better the quality of the cotton, and therefore the more expensive. Cotton doesn't tear easily and is heat resistant. Cotton can absorb a lot of water; however, it dries slowly.

FABRIC CARE: Most colored cottons need to be washed in cold water (no higher than 40°C) to keep the colors from running.

GOOD FOR: *Shift and Shout* (see page 65), *Raglan and Scones* (see page 77).

Linens

Linen is made from flax fibers and has a crisp texture. It tends to wrinkle very easily, which can be part of its appeal. The great thing about linen is that it softens with every washing.

FABRIC CARE: Wash in warm water or dry clean. If you prefer pressed linen, use a hot iron while the linen is still slightly damp. Use spray starch and iron with steam.

GOOD FOR: *Shift and Shout* (see page 65), *All Wrapped Up* (see page 120).

Synthetic Fibers

There are some wonderful synthetic fibers, with variations being introduced all the time. They tend to feature qualities of elasticity, moisture resistance, durability, and colorfastness.

FABRIC CARE: Depends on the type of fiber. Rayon might require dry cleaning. Polyester is usually easy to launder in a washer and dryer. Microfibers can also be machine-washed and dried. Press with low heat and steam.

GOOD FOR: *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153), *The Captain's Shirt Dress* (see page 108).

Everyday Fabrics

Most of these popular fabrics are easy to sew and are made of cotton (or linen) fibers. They also can often be found blended with synthetic fibers to combine the winning characteristics of the multiple fibers.

Corduroy

Corduroy has a ribbed texture, formed by woven twisted fibers that follow the lengthwise grain. The width of the ribs can vary, ranging from narrow needle-cord to wide-wale cord.

FABRIC CARE: It's a good idea to wash corduroy inside out to prevent the nap from matting down. Wash corduroy with similar colors and avoid washing it with lint-producing fabrics like fleece. Corduroy tends to shrink, so dry the garment on low heat and shake it out as soon as you remove it from the dryer.

GOOD FOR: *Jump Around* (see page 93), *Sunday-Best Button Dress* (see page 132).

CORDUROY
COTTON LAWN
CHIFFON
LACE

VOILE
EYELET
GINGHAM
DENIM
TULLE
SATIN
TAFFETA

Cotton Lawn

Cotton lawn is lightweight and semitransparent, from gauzy to sheer to practically opaque. Lawn can be white, dyed, or printed, and is an excellent choice for cool summer dresses.

FABRIC CARE: Machine-wash in cool water with mild fabric detergent. Let the garment air-dry flat. Use a warm iron to press out wrinkles.

GOOD FOR: *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153).

Denim

This heavyweight cotton twill has warp threads that are usually dyed blue or black and appear on the right or top side of the fabric. The weft is white.

FABRIC CARE: Machine-wash denim garments in cold water with other dark clothing of the same weight. Machine-dry until damp and then air-dry.

GOOD FOR: *Jump Around* (see page 93), *The Captain's Shirt Dress* (see page 108).

Eyelet

Great for summer, eyelet is usually light to medium in weight and looks great with a bright lining that is visible through the eyelet openings.

FABRIC CARE: Care really depends on the size of the eyelets. If they are small, you can wash your cotton eyelet as you would regular cotton. Eyelet with larger holes requires more careful treatment. I suggest hand-washing or using a delicate machine wash cycle with delicate fabric detergent.

GOOD FOR: *Peep Show* (see page 127), *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153) — just remember to add a lining to it!

Gingham

I've got a real love for gingham and its fun retro vibe! This medium-weight, plain-weave fabric has a checkered or striped appearance. The fibers are dyed before they are woven.

FABRIC CARE: Cotton gingham wrinkles easily and tends to shrink, so wash it in cold water and dry it on low setting. It will probably require pressing. A synthetic blend can handle a regular warm machine wash and dry with no problems.

GOOD FOR: *Baking Babe* (see page 87), *Mini-Break Basic* (see page 103).

Voile

Voile is a lightweight cotton fabric. It can be quite transparent, so make sure you add a lining to a dress made from this fabric.

FABRIC CARE: Wash in a gentle cycle or hand-wash.

GOOD FOR: *Garden Goddess* (see page 81), *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153).

Start Your Own Swatch Book

At fashion school we collected fabrics to create a swatch book. It was a useful way of keeping track of the different textures and qualities. This can be especially useful when designing, since swatches provide an idea of how the fabric will drape. Keep a note next to each swatch that indicates:

- Fabric name
- Fiber content
- Where you bought it
- Cost per yard

Fun Fabrics

Party time! Whether or not you like to party in tutus and circle skirts, these fabulous fabrics are sure to bring life and soul to you and your favorite dresses!

Chiffon

Chiffon is a lightweight, plain-weave sheer fabric. It is woven with twisted crepe yarns that give the fabric both stretch and a slightly rough feel. Chiffon is available in both natural and synthetic fibers.

FABRIC CARE: Hand-wash to protect this delicate fabric.

GOOD FOR: *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153).

Delicates

Certain fabrics are always safer to hand-wash. However, if you have tested the fabric in a low-temperature hand-wash and it doesn't shrink or tear, then try this: Protect the garment by putting it in a laundry bag or pillowcase and knot it closed. Machine-wash it on the delicate setting with cold water. I do this with my tights and delicate fabrics to keep them from getting caught up in other garments.

Lace

Lace is an openwork fabric with holes in it, made either by machine or hand. It is manufactured from natural fibers, such as cotton, silk, and linen, as well as synthetic fibers. Use vibrantly dyed lace as an accented detail to add some pop to your dresses. Lace comes in all kinds of great colors, from pastels to neons, so be sweet and girly, or outright loud with it!

FABRIC CARE: Hand-wash this delicate fabric. After washing, lace might need some reshaping, so don't

A YARDAGE GUIDE

The dresses in this book are cut from 54"-wide fabric. The materials list (Need It) for each project tells you how much yardage to buy, and the cutting layouts show you how to arrange the pieces. However, if you are finding fabric you love in a more common 44/45"-wide fabric, use this table to refigure how much yardage you need to buy. Most of the cutting layouts have some room to spare, so use them as a guide when arranging the pieces to fit. If you're unsure, do a test layout with the pattern pieces before you buy fabric, so you'll be sure to have enough.

FABRIC CONVERSION CHART

54"-WIDE FABRIC	44/45"-WIDE FABRIC
(yards project calls for)	(yards you need)
1½	1¾
1¾	2⅛
2	2½
2¼	2¾
2½	2⅞
2¾	3⅜
3	3⅞

FABRIC PREP WARNING!

Always prewash your fabric before you sew together a project. Otherwise, you may find that after the first wash, your dress is shorter, twisted, or the colors have run.

freak out if it doesn't look right when it's wet. Lay it flat, pull it gently back into shape, and leave it flat to dry.
GOOD FOR: *Peep Show* (see page 127), design details: think collars, cuffs, pockets, and linings (oohhh, how secretive).

Satin

Satin can be woven in natural and/or synthetic fibers. It has a shiny surface and slippery texture with a dull background created by its warp-dominated weaving technique.
FABRIC CARE: With cold water, hand-wash or use the delicate cycle of your washing machine. Do not use the dryer or wring out the dress. Instead, lay it out flat on a dry, clean towel and roll it in the towel to remove excess water. Transfer the dress to a new, dry towel and allow it to dry flat. Iron on a medium-heat setting and do not use steam.
GOOD FOR: *Princess Perfect* (see page 139), *Flirty Flare* (see page 144).

Taffeta

Crisp and smooth, this plain-weave fabric is made in either silk or synthetic fabrics. You can find some incredible taffetas, some of which are also incredibly expensive!
FABRIC CARE: Dry-clean only.
GOOD FOR: *Flirty Flare* (see page 144), *Enchanted Evening* (see page 160), and *Ruffle and Ready* (see page 152).

Tulle

I'm not known as The Queen of the Tutu for nothing! There is no harm in sticking a tutu under your dress, right? Tulle adds volume and that party-girl feel to any dress! I love to use tulle with fabrics that it's not normally paired with.

Tulle is a sheer synthetic fabric typically made from nylon, rayon, or silk. It is lightweight netting that is often starched and can be relatively cheap, depending on the fiber content. Tulle is available in many colors and can be easily dyed. The fabric is traditionally used for bridal and eveningwear.
FABRIC CARE: I find that dry cleaning flattens the tulle, which you do not want. Either hand-wash or machine-wash on a low temperature setting.
GOOD FOR: *Flirty Flare* (see page 144).

Mix and Match

I have always been a fan of mixing fabrics together in one project. When you mix fabrics, though, you need to:

- Choose fabrics of similar weight and drape so they work together.
- Make sure that the fabrics can all be cleaned and treated in the same way.
- Preshrink the fabrics before cutting and sewing.
- Wash test swatches of the fabrics together to make sure the colors do not run.

Where Are You Going Dressed Like That, Young Lady?

When you are designing and making your dress, think about where you are going to be wearing it. Consider the shape, the style, and the fabric.

I ***love*** working with prints. I can't seem to control myself around animal prints, be they *au naturel* or in some mad psychedelic version! Here is some fabric for thought.

Tool Kits

My green and pink polka-dot tool kit is so fun and inspiring. When I go into my studio, I feel like a child rummaging through my dress-up box! My tool kit is super organized and has all my essentials in one place. Make your design world inspirational by transforming your work space and tool kit into a reflection of your own individual style and personality.

Patternmaking Essentials

Your patternmaking tools are your weapons in the work space — at least this is how it felt on *Project Runway*! Before you start to work, lay out the tools you are going to use, and take good care of them. You'll be using them a lot!

- **CARDSTOCK:** Make your slopers out of cardstock rather than pattern paper since you will use them over and over again. Cardstock slopers will maintain their shape, won't tear, and are easier to trace. Large pieces of cardstock can be found at most arts and crafts stores. The sheets come in various sizes, but if you can only find the 8½" × 11" size, simply tape the pieces together until they are large enough for your sloper. I like to use invisible tape because it has a matte finish that you can draw on with both pens and pencils.

- **DRESS FORMS:** A dress form, also known as a mannequin, is an adjustable figure you can use to test the fit and shape of a garment. Depending on how far you take your dressmaking, whether it remains a hobby or becomes a career, investing in a dress form is a good idea and will make a huge difference when fitting your dresses. It is far easier to fix the shape of a dress when it is on a form than on your body.

  Dress forms come in all sizes and are available in different price ranges. The least expensive ones come in adjustable styles, but they are not very sturdy and tend to be difficult to work on since they are hard to pin into. Professional dress forms are a great investment and will last you a lifetime. Generally, they cost around $300 to $400, but you might get lucky and find something online in the $150 to $200 range. If you truly want the best possible dress form, have one custom-made to your measurements and specifications. Check with your local fabric stores to see if they know a good resource.

- **DRESSMAKER'S PINS:** Dressmaker's pins are used for pinning fabrics together, but are also useful when working with paper patterns. Many people prefer pins with colored heads because they are easier to see on fabric, but they do tend to distort the fabric a bit when pinning and you might not get a clean cut. I prefer the Precision Point Pins #24. It's just a personal preference. If you go for the colored ball-head pins, opt for glass; they won't melt under the iron.

- **MUSLIN:** This cheap, unbleached fabric is the standard fabric used for the mock-up or test-dress, before you make a garment in actual

WEIGHTS
MUSLIN
PENCILS
TAILOR'S CHALK
REMOVABLE TAPE
PATTERN NOTCHER
RULERS
PATTERN PAPER
TRACING WHEEL
Styling Design Ruler
TRACING PAPER
TAPE MEASURE
DRESSMAKER'S PINS

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Custom dress forms are obviously expensive, so make your own custom mannequin instead. Review the body measurements of standard, professional dress forms and buy one a size smaller than your body measurements. Then, add padding at the desired locations to create the correct size duplicate of your body.

NEED IT

- Dress form
- Padded bra, if needed
- Shoulder pads
- Batting or quilted fabric
- Jersey
- Straight pins

DO IT

1. If more shape is needed in the bust area, pin a padded bra over the bust of the dress form. If needed, add even more padding (cut from batting).

2. Shoulder pads work great to add shape around the waist and on the butt. Pin them in place to best duplicate your measurements.

3. Wrap layers of a lightweight quilted fabric or batting around the waist and other areas that need to be filled out. Cover the entire dress form with jersey fabric and pin it in place.

fabric. It is a good idea to test your slopers in muslin first, for fit and shape. Once you have your slopers fitting perfectly, then you know the dresses based on the same pattern will also fit. It is also advisable to create a muslin mock-up when testing out a new technique.

- **PAPER SCISSORS:** You'll need paper scissors for cutting out the paper pattern pieces. Keep them separate from your fabric scissors, which become dull when used to cut paper.

- **PATTERN NOTCHER:** I use this tool as much as I use my scissors. If you have used store-bought patterns before, you've seen the notches in the seam allowance that look like little triangles. You use them to match up different pattern pieces. Rather than using your scissors to cut out uneven triangles, the pattern notcher creates consistently even clips in your patterns, making it easy to match up seams, seam allowances, and darts.

- **PATTERN PAPER:** You can buy pattern paper in rolls, either plain white or with a 1" grid. The grids are terrific, making it much easier to measure, draw straight lines, and adjust the pattern lines as you work.

- **PENCILS:** I love automatic pencils! Also called mechanical or technical pencils, they draw a much finer and more consistent line than regular pencils, which require constant sharpening. I use a 0.7mm for a strong, clean line. It's also fine to use a standard lead pencil; just keep it nice and sharp.

You'll also want two or three different *colored pencils* for marking changes on existing patterns. It is a good idea to use a consistent color system, for instance: first draft in regular pencil, second round in red, third round in blue, and so on.

- **RULERS:** An acrylic, 2"-wide transparent grid ruler is great for working on paper and fabric. You can work with it flat but also bend it and use it on edge if you are measuring curved seams, such as necklines and armholes. It's a *clear* must-have!

  Dressmaking curved rulers come in various sizes. The *French curve* is the smaller one, great for neckline and collar curves. The *vary form curve* is the larger one and more appropriate for hip curves and hems (see page 47).

- **TAILOR'S CHALK:** You'll need this special chalk for tracing pattern pieces onto the fabric before cutting, as well as for marking alterations direction on the garments. Tailor's chalk easily brushes off fabrics when you no longer need the reference, so don't worry about damaging your dress. You can buy tailor's chalk in a handy pencil style, or in square or triangular pieces, and in different colors (useful for making changes). It's totally a personal preference, so test them out and see what you feel comfortable using.

- **TAPE:** Removable tape is my secret weapon! Whether you need to tape down pattern paper while you trace it, or tape two patterns together, this is the tape you want. It is strong enough to stay together but will not damage your patterns if you want to . . . *remove* it!

  Use *invisible tape* when you are taping cardstock or pattern pieces together permanently. You can mark over it as needed for matching symbols or for size and style adjustments.

- **TAPE MEASURE:** Get the flexible type, good for measuring fabric and curved patterns on paper, and for taking body measurements. It is important to have a good quality tape measure that does not stretch or rip.

- **TRACING PAPER AND WHEEL:** Use dressmakers's tracing paper (which comes in a range of colors) and a tracing wheel to transfer the design lines of your drafted pattern pieces to create the actual pattern pieces. You'll find instructions for how to do this in the next chapter (see pages 39–40).

- **WEIGHTS:** When you work with multiple layers of paper and fabric, you'll need weights. You can buy special weights designed for dressmaking, and there are some really cute ones out there. I have fallen in love with my little pink weights; they are like mini beanbags! Any heavy household or office object will do, though, such as heavy fabric shears or a book. I also use my stapler and hole punch.

Sewing Essentials

The tools listed in this section are for dressmaking and it is definitely worth investing in them all eventually. Start with the key tools and add the remainder as you sew more. The right tools make the job easier and as you add to your tool kit, you'll definitely wonder how you ever lived without them. Keep your sewing tools separate from your patternmaking tools.

- **DRESSMAKER'S HAM:** OMG, I am obsessed with my ham! Believe me, if you don't get one of these, you are making more work for yourself than you need. I didn't buy one for years and regret not having bought one a long time ago. The ham will help you press curved seams and darts, areas that are difficult to press and shape on a flat ironing board. The difference it makes to the smoothness of your seams and the overall fit of your dress is really amazing, especially when it comes to armholes and sleeves.

- **DRESSMAKER'S PINS:** The same dressmaker pins you use for patternmaking are necessary for dressmaking (see page 18). Keep some in your patternmaking kit and some in your sewing tool kit.

- **FABRIC SHEARS:** Fabric shears have 7" or 8" blades and bent handles so the blades rest on the table as you cut large pieces of fabric. Take care of your fabric shears and keep them separate from your paper scissors. Never use your fabric shears to cut paper or they will become dull very quickly.

- **HAND-SEWING NEEDLES:** Hand-sewing needles come in a variety of types and sizes. Sharps are all-purpose hand needles suitable for sewing almost all fabrics with all types of threads. For embroidery or decorative work, you might want embroidery or crewel hand needles because they have larger eyes to accommodate the thicker decorative threads. Hand-needle size is the opposite of machine needles: the larger the size, the finer the needle. Most basic hand sewing is done with sharps in sizes 6 (heavyweight) to 9 (lightweight).

- **INTERFACING:** Interfacing adds shape and support to curved seams and facing pieces. It also prevents the fabric from fraying and stretching. There are two types of interfacing, fusible and sew-in.

  Fusible interfacing has a resin coating that fuses to the wrong side of the fabric when steam, heat, and pressure are applied with an iron. You cannot use fusible interfacing on certain fabrics, such as lace, mesh, brocade, rayon, seersucker, or beaded or sequined fabric.

  Cut fusible interfacing ¼" smaller than your pattern pieces, to avoid bulk at the seams. To do this, trace the pattern pieces you want to interface directly on the interfacing and simply cut ⅛" within the traced cutting line. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for how to fuse the interfacing in place, but be sure to lift the iron up and down instead of moving it back and forth as you fuse.

  Sew-in interfacing takes a bit longer to secure to the fabric, but is necessary for fabrics that can't withstand the heat and

SAFETY PINS
PRESS CLOTH
DRESSMAKER'S HAM
DRESSMAKER'S PINS
THREAD
PINCUSHION
INTERFACING
THREAD SCISSORS
SEAM RIPPER
FABRIC SHEARS
SEWING MACHINE NEEDLES
HAND-SEWING NEEDLES

pressure needed to attach fusible interfacing, such as pile fabrics and specialty fabrics. Light- to medium-weight interfacing is suitable for most dresses.

Cut sew-in interfacing the same size as the pattern pieces to which it will be attached. Pin the interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric and machine- or hand-baste it in place within the seam allowance. Then sew the pieces as usual, treating the interfacing and fabric as one.

- **IRON AND IRONING BOARD:** You'll want a good steam iron and sturdy ironing board. Use your iron to press both fabric and paper, but don't use steam when pressing paper. When you are drafting on pattern paper you want it nice and flat, so press out the folds. It's also important for the patterns to be smooth and flat when pinning them onto the fabric, to get the truest transfer. And, of course, you'll use your iron in every step of the sewing process.

- **PINCUSHION OR MAGNETIC BOWL:** You can buy a pincushion, but you can just as easily make your own by sewing scrap fabrics into a ball and packing it with stuffing. You can also stick a piece of Velcro on the bottom of the pincushion and attach it to the lid of a mason jar containing extra pins or threads.

  I prefer a magnetic bowl because it is so easy to use. You just drop pins on top of it and they all stay bunched together, making them easy to grab. The pincushion is light and easy to travel with, while the magnetic bowl is good to keep in your work space.

- **PRESS CLOTH:** A press cloth is used between your fabric and your iron to protect delicate fabrics from the iron and the iron from fusible residue. It needs to be made of natural fibers, which are less likely to burn. You can buy a press cloth, or make one from fabric scraps of 100% natural fibers, which can withstand high iron temperatures. The press cloth needs to be dry since it is there to protect the fabric.

- **SAFETY PINS:** These are essential for threading elastic or a drawstring through a casing.

- **SEAM RIPPER:** It's so important to have a seam ripper, especially if you are new to sewing. Even experienced sewers make mistakes; it is simply part of the process. Don't be afraid to rip out seams that aren't right, and try not to get too irritated! Use the point of the seam ripper to pull the thread away from the fabric slightly and then use the blade, which is in the curve of the seam ripper, to cut the thread. Be careful when working with delicate fabrics, such as silk or cotton voile, because you could permanently damage or rip the fabric.

- **SEWING MACHINE:** I was a little freaked out when I started fashion school. We worked on these scary industrial sewing machines that literally ripped the fabric from your hands. The home sewing machines are far gentler and you can even set the machine to a slow stitch until you are comfortable with the machine.

  If you are considering buying a sewing machine, there are many brilliant ones on the market. Even machines with a variety

of stitch options are reasonably priced. You don't need to get too fancy, though; simply look for one that has a *straight* and a *zigzag stitch*. You'll use the straight stitch for most of your machine sewing. The zigzag can be used to edge finish and stitch knits, much like the overlock stitch you find on expensive serger machines.

Most machines also come with a few interchangeable presser feet. You'll surely want a *zipper foot* for help installing zippers, in addition to the standard presser foot. Some machines also come with a *buttonhole foot* and a special *invisible zipper foot*, which makes inserting an invisible zipper a breeze.

What Is a Serger?

A serger, or overlock machine, uses three or more spools of thread at once to stitch those finished fabric edges you find in commercially made clothing. As the fabric is fed through it, the machine slices off the edge of the seam allowance with a small blade while looping the threads over the cut edge. Some sergers are set up to stitch the seam while finishing the edge, while others are primarily used for edge finishing. Again, there are some wonderful and inexpensive sergers on the market for home use. Be warned, they are quite a headache to thread. Take a look inside some of your store-bought clothes and you'll identify an overlock stitch in everything from jeans and dresses to jackets and T-shirts.

- **SEWING MACHINE NEEDLES:** You will need different type and size needles for different types of fabrics and tasks. It's common sense, really — the thicker the fabric, the stronger the needle needs to be.

  Using the correct type and size sewing machine needle will give you the best stitch results and will minimize damaging your machine and your fabrics. *Universal needles* are suitable for machine-stitching most woven fabrics. There are a variety of specialty needles as well. A few that you might find helpful include *ballpoint needles* (with a rounded point) for machine-stitching knits; *denim needles,* which have a sharp point and can penetrate heavy fabrics easily; and *topstitching needles* for visible stitching with heavier threads.

  As a general rule, the smaller the number indicating machine needle size, the finer the needle. Lightweight fabrics typically require a #8–10 size needle; a #12 is a good all-purpose needle size for medium-weight fabrics; while heavier fabrics like corduroy and denim need a heavier, #14 needle. If you try to machine-stitch a heavyweight fabric with a slim needle, it's going to break. Needles do wear and can break, so make sure you keep a supply on hand. There is nothing worse then a needle breaking halfway through a project in the middle of the night, with no backups in sight!

- **SPRAY BOTTLE:** I use a spray bottle filled with water when I am pressing seams, as well as steam from the iron. The direct spray gives you better control of the area you need to dampen. I find that the water sprayer on irons tends to have a mind of its own and can spray in any crazy direction.

READY FOR ANYTHING!

I keep these things right near my machine as I am working, making it easy to sew, cut, or seam-rip; trash it, cut it, or fix it.

- **MAGNET BOWL OR PINCUSHION.** I like a magnet bowl better than a pincushion (see page 24) because you can just drop the pins straight into the bowl. A pincushion is totally fine, just a little more fiddly; it's a personal preference.

- **SEAM RIPPER.** You are going to need this at some point (see page 24)! It's a good tool to have at the ready.

- **THREAD SCISSORS OR SNIPS.** Keep a pair handy, so you can quickly trim loose threads on the spot.

- **TRASH CAN.** I keep this on my left, so I can quickly drop any loose threads and fabric scraps straight into the trash. A tidy and clean space is a productive work space!

- **THREAD:** All-purpose thread comes in cotton, polyester, or cotton-wrapped polyester variations and is suitable for making all of the projects featured in this book. I always keep a couple of spools of black, white, and gray all-purpose threads in my tool kit, as these colors work with most projects. Note that cotton all-purpose thread is perfect for sewing on natural-fiber, woven fabrics, but it is not a good choice for knits, jersey, or other stretchy fabrics, because it doesn't stretch. Polyester and cotton-wrapped polyester threads are suitable for both woven and knitted fabrics.

- **THREAD SCISSORS OR EMBROIDERY SCISSORS:** These smaller scissors are used to cut threads and notches, clip curves, and assist with seam ripping. I keep them right by my sewing machine along with my magnetic bowl and seam ripper, to quickly clip loose threads.

Here are a few additional useful tools to add to your toolbox when you can.

- **BEESWAX:** Beeswax is a great help when threading needles. It serves to smooth the thread and make it slightly stiff, so it's easier to push through that tiny needle eye. It also helps prevent thread from tangling when hand sewing.

- **HEM GAUGE:** Use a hem gauge to measure and pin a hem evenly around any garment. Set the gauge to the width you want. Then, slip the hem gauge under the folded edge as you turn, press, and pin the edge of the hem in place.

LOOP TURNER
PINKING SHEARS
POINT TURNER
THIMBLE
BEESWAX
HEM GAUGE
SLEEVE BOARD

- **LOOP TURNER:** This handy little tool makes it easy to turn ties and straps right side out. Use it to make those lovely spaghetti straps (see *Sweetheart Sundress*, page 153) and for any narrow straps (see *All Wrapped Up*, page 120, and *Garden Goddess*, page 81).

- **PINKING SHEARS:** These scissors have a zigzag edge and are used to prevent fabric edges and seams from unraveling. Pinking shears offer another option for finishing seam edges. If you don't have a serger or a zigzag stitch on your machine, this is the way to go.

- **POINT TURNER:** Point turners come in wood or acrylic and are used for pushing out fabric corners once they are sewn. I love my point turner; it's such a simple, inexpensive tool, but so useful. I prefer the wooden ones, which are smoother and won't catch or damage the fabric.

- **ROTARY CUTTER:** This sharp tool has a round blade that you use much like a pizza cutter, and is very helpful when cutting long straight edges. It works best when combined with a rotary cutting mat and wide, heavy-duty acrylic ruler. You can often buy all three together as part of a kit. Beware, this tool is very sharp, so be sure to keep your fingers clear of the blade as you cut, and remember to use the safety guard every time you put it down. Follow all manufacturer precautions.

- **SLEEVE BOARD:** This mini ironing board is useful for pressing sleeves and other small openings. I don't use mine much, but it is definitely useful if you are sewing a lot of sleeves.

- **THIMBLE:** Many seamstresses like to use a thimble to protect their fingers when sewing by hand. I only use mine when I am attaching studs to my garments (see *Stud Muffin*, page 92).

CHAPTER 2

SLOPERS, PATTERNS, AND MUSLINS

There are two ways to make garments: draping and patternmaking. Draping is the process in which you drape fabric directly on a dress form; this method is not covered in this book. Patternmaking is designing on paper, through the creation of flat patterns. All patternmaking begins with body measurements, which are used to make a sloper. A sloper is a flat, two-dimensional template that represents the shape of the body. Once you draft a sloper based on your own measurements, you can trace this custom sloper to draft a variety of patterns. You then test your designs by making them in muslin and then finally in your fashion fabric. This chapter walks you through each of these steps.

The dress must follow the body of a woman, not the body following the shape of the dress.

— HUBERT DE GIVENCHY

To download the Sloper PDFs go to page 200.

Body Talk

Let's celebrate ourselves for being different! Wouldn't the world be a dull place if we were all the same size? Having worked as a fashion stylist for magazines at fashion shows, and as a personal stylist, I have really come to understand women's bodies and how to make the best of our female assets. I never think in terms of disguising "the bad bits" because there are only "good bits" to emphasize.

There is no point in wearing something that doesn't fit right or doesn't suit your shape. Dressing right for your body can make you feel empowered and confident. When you look great, you feel great, too. Being able to make your own dresses to your exact measurements is going to make you feel even more fabulous!

Five Body Types

I like to think of our various feminine shapes as fruits and vegetables. I am currently so obsessed with garlic, I put it on everything! And then it occurred to me that I actually *am* a garlic clove — my shape, that is (otherwise known as the pear shape). Garlic, toffee apple, string bean, strawberry, or cucumber, we're all delicious, no matter what size or shape!

Toffee Apple

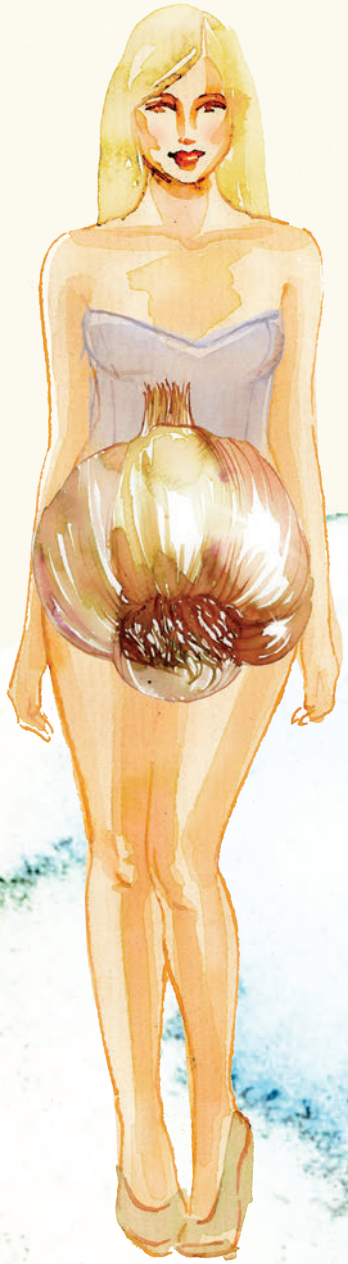
My old boarding school housemistress was your classic toffee apple on a stick. She had great legs, with a rounder, fuller figure on top. Toffee apples should always show off their legs and create an illusion that the body is slimmer at the waist. It can also help to either eliminate the waistline of a dress completely, or to raise or lower the waistline.

One great dress for this body type is an A-line silhouette, which slims the waistline and lengthens the body without drawing any attention to the midsection. Another option is an empire waist dress, which conceals the waist and hips, and diverts the eye. You can also add interest to a neckline with a deep V, sweetheart, or scoop shape to draw the eye upward. A halter neckline also creates more of an hourglass shape illusion. *Garden Goddess* on page 81 and *Belle of the Ball* on page 164 are both empire waist styles, perfect for toffee apples!

Garlic

I am your typical bulb of garlic, with a small chest and bigger hips. Puffy skirts and tutus look great on us garlic shapes, drawing the eye up to our slimmer shoulders. A garlic-shaped girl wants to elongate her body and balance out the top with the bottom, to create more of an hourglass figure. Garlic shapes should find ways to accentuate their top halves.

There are several ways to do this. One option is to balance bigger hips with halter tops that make the bust appear bigger. A padded bra or chicken cutlets (also known as silicone bra inserts) work, too! Shoulder pads give more volume up top, while a large collar or fun embellishment draws the eye to the neckline. Another deceiving trick is to wear a dress that is lighter at the top and darker at the bottom. *Tinker, Tailor, Sew a Sailor* (see page 106), *Sunset Strip* (see page 131), and *Flower Power* (see page 163) are all good choices.



Strawberry

Strawberries are petite girls with bigger busts, teeny waists, and small hips. These girls can rock the '50s look and take inspiration from Bettie Page, the legendary "queen of pinups." Strawberries can find great vintage pieces that won't need much alteration and will allow great freedom for customizing and accessorizing. To balance out the strawberry shape, dresses with volume from the waist down are great. The *Flirty Flare* dress (see page 144) is fun and flattering, as is the *Sweetheart Sundress* (see page 153). I like to create even more volume at the hips by adding a tutu as a petticoat.

Cucumber

This body shape is tall and boyish, with broad shoulders and no waist. Cucumbers can create the illusion of a waist with a slim belt and contrasting fabrics on top and bottom. Cucumbers can get away with mixing and matching colors, prints, and fabrics, which makes the *Garden Goddess* (see page 81) a great dress for the cucumber. Other options include *Piping Hot* (see page 70) and *Jump Around* (see page 93). Go wild, you crazy ol' cucumber!

String Bean

Similar to the cucumber, super-slim string beans can also mix and match with fabrics and prints. String beans are lucky because they can fit into anything, but that doesn't mean everything will suit them. With those long slim legs, you have the option for a shorter hem; or add length to the dresses in this book, since this body type can get away with longer silhouettes. String beans can also get away with simple silhouettes with great colors, for instance, *The Captain's Shirt Dress* (see page 108). *Raglan and Scones* (see page 77) is a great option since the cut of the raglan sleeve adds dimension to the body.

Measure Up!

As we all know from sewing and trying on clothes, dress and pattern sizes are far from standard. I've sized the slopers from XS to XL and provided a size chart (see below) to help you determine which of these sizes you need. Measurements do not include seam allowance, but do include a bit of room for ease. You don't want to make garments skintight; you have to be able to move in them.

If you fit a standard size (bust, waist, *and* hips) closely, you can simply use one of the standard slopers provided to make the patterns for all your dresses. If your size doesn't duplicate all three measurements for a particular size, or if you prefer a custom fit, use the chart on page 37 to record your own measurements and go ahead and make your own custom slopers (see page 41).

Grade School

"Grading" a pattern means to enlarge or reduce an existing pattern to fit either a smaller or larger size.

How to Measure Correctly

When taking your measurements, keep the following pointers in mind:

- Don't hold the tape measure too tight or too loose. You want your sloper to include roughly 1" of total ease for body movement, so that is a ¼" on the pattern half front (whole front ½") and ¼" on the pattern half back (whole back ½"). Place one finger between you and the tape measure to get an accurate measurement.

- It's best to take measurements over the undergarments you typically wear or clothes that are well fitted, such as leggings and a tight T-shirt or tank top. You will often be instructed to measure from side seam to side seam. Do not measure over multiple layers or thick garments.

SIZE CHART

SPECS	MY SPECS	XS (2–4)	S (6–8)	M (10–12)	L (14–16)	XL (18–20)
BUST		29½"	31½"	34"	38"	42"
WAIST		22"	24"	26½"	30"	34"
HIPS		31½"	33½"	36"	40"	44"

Fill in your own specs in the second column.

- Use the mirror to make sure the tape measure is straight and level around your body.

- Get a friend to help! Some of the specs are hard, or virtually impossible, to take on your own. If you don't have a friend handy and you want to get started, select a favorite garment of your own that fits well. Lay it flat and measure it.

Okay, now for the specifics. Note that the following measurements are often divided by 2 (sometimes twice) because the patterns and slopers are divided that way (the front sloper represents half of the front; the back sloper is half of the back). Check these descriptions against the illustration on page 37.

A **BUST:** To measure the circumference of your bust, begin by placing one end of the tape measure at the fullest part of your bust. Wrap the tape under your armpits, across your shoulder blades, and back to the front.

B **FRONT AND BACK CHEST:** The front of your body at the bust is obviously bigger than the back. Take a look at the slopers provided to get an idea of the balance between front and back. For your front chest, measure across your bust from side seam to side seam. Subtract that from the total bust measurement for the back chest. Divide both numbers by 2.

C **APEX FROM CENTER FRONT:** This is the distance from the center of your body between your breasts to the apex (nipple) of one breast. Instead of trying to find your body center, though, it's easier to measure from apex to apex and divide by 2.

D **NECK TO APEX:** Measure from the top of your shoulder at the neck (the "high shoulder point") directly down to your apex.

E **WAIST:** Measure the circumference of your waist at your natural waistline, just above your belly button and below your rib cage. A trick to finding your natural waist is to stand tall facing a mirror and bend to the side until you create a crease at your side waist; this is your natural waist. If you are having problems locating this spot, pull the tape measure back and forth like a drawstring, and it will settle at your natural waistline. Avoid sucking your stomach in; you want clothes that fit comfortably, so there is no point in taking a false measurement. Clothes that are too tight only make you look bigger.

F **FRONT AND BACK WAIST:** Divide the waist measurement in half for front and back waist specs, then divide by 2 for sloper measurements.

G **NECK TO WAIST:** To make any upper body adjustments, you'll need measurements from your neckline to your waist on both the front and back of your body.

H LOW WAIST: Depending on style, you might prefer a lower waistline for a dress, so it is worth taking this measurement as well. Measure the circumference of your body at the location where you like to wear your favorite dropped-waist dresses or skirts.

I FRONT AND BACK LOW WAIST: Since this is lower on the hips, instead of dividing the waist measurement in half, measure from side seam to side seam for front and back, as you did for the bust. Divide by 2 for sloper measurement.

J HIPS: To measure the circumference of your hips, start at the center front of your body, between 3"–5" below your belly button. This varies from person to person. You are measuring the widest part of your body, so move the tape up and down until you find that largest measurement.

K FRONT AND BACK HIPS: Measure from side seam to side seam to find your front hip measurement, then subtract from the total circumference to find the back hip measurement. The back will be bigger than the front. Divide both by 2 for the sloper measurement.

L NECK TO HIP: Now that you've located the widest part of your hip, measure from the neckline to this point. Use the same measurement for front and back.

M SHOULDER WIDTH: Measure from your high shoulder point (neckline) to your shoulder seam. This is obviously the same for the front and the back.

N LENGTH: For a full length, measure from the top of your shoulder at the neck down to the floor. Also record the distance from that same shoulder point to your knee.

Here's how to take key sleeve measurements:

O UPPER ARM: To measure the circumference of your arm, hold the tape measure around the widest part of your upper arm, around your bicep.

P WRIST: Make a fist and measure around it for your wrist measurement. This will ensure that the wrist edge of the sleeve will fit over your hand.

Q OVERARM LENGTH/SET-IN SLEEVE: Measure from the shoulder seam to your wrist. Take a separate measurement from the same shoulder point to your elbow (for a short sleeve).

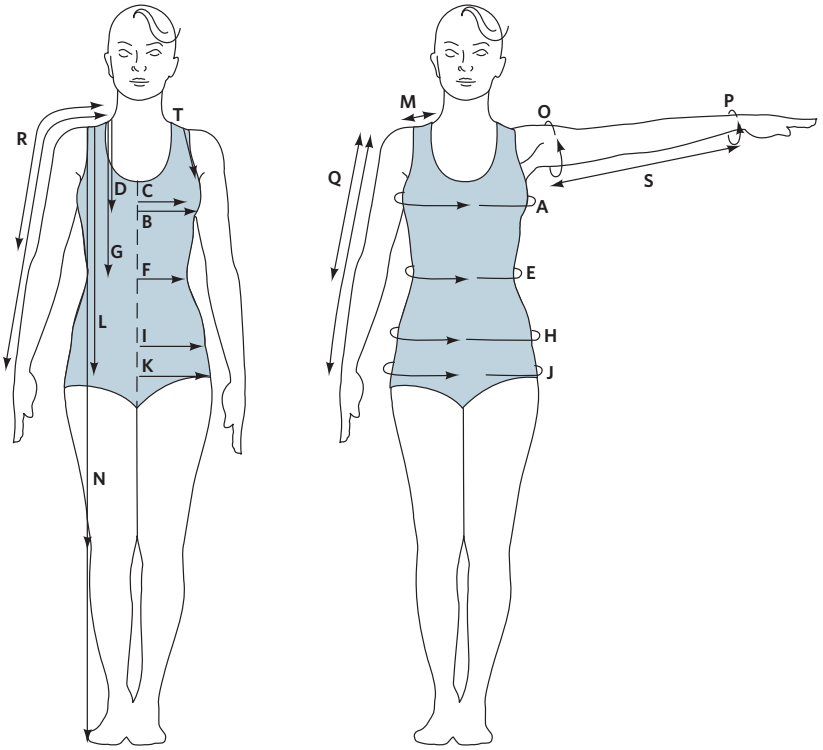
R OVERARM LENGTH/RAGLAN SLEEVE: Measure from the high shoulder point (neckline) to your wrist. Take a separate measurement from the same point to your elbow (for a short sleeve).

S UNDERARM LENGTH: *For a set-in sleeve*, measure from 1" below your armpit to your wrist. *For a raglan sleeve*, measure from 1¾" below your armpit to your wrist, since the raglan sleeve begins lower than the regular sleeve and requires more ease.

T SLEEVE CAP (FOR SET-IN SLEEVES): Measure from the top of your shoulder at the shoulder seam to the underarm in the front and in the back. (The front armhole is usually 1" larger than the back.) Add about ½" to each (front and back) measurement for ease.

My Measurements

- Ⓐ Bust
- Ⓑ Front chest
- Back chest
- Ⓒ Apex from center front
- Ⓓ Neck to apex
- Ⓔ Waist
- Ⓕ Front waist
- Back waist
- Ⓖ Neck to waist, front
- Neck to waist, back
- Ⓗ Low waist
- Ⓘ Front low waist
- Back low waist
- Ⓙ Hips
- Ⓚ Front hips
- Back hips
- Ⓛ Neck to hip
- Ⓜ Shoulder width
- Ⓝ Length to floor
- Length to knee
- Ⓞ Upper arm
- Ⓟ Wrist
- Ⓠ Overarm length/set-in, long
- Overarm length/set-in, short
- Ⓡ Overarm length/raglan, long
- Overarm length/raglan, short
- Ⓢ Underarm length
- Ⓣ Sleeve cap height, front
- Sleeve cap height, back



BASIC PATTERNMAKING STEPS

1 **SLOPERS** are the basic starting point for all patternmaking. Unlike patterns, slopers do not have seam allowances added. A good set of custom slopers is a great time-saver since you won't have to take measurements and draft the same basic shapes for each new project.

2 **DRAFTS** Every draft begins by tracing your sloper onto pattern paper. Fine-tune your design by drawing design style lines and adding patternmaking marks. Never cut out your drafts; save them for future reference.

3 **PATTERNS** are the final paper versions of your designs. Once you are satisfied with your drafts, you copy them onto clean patternmaking paper and use them to make your dresses.

4 **MUSLINS** Before you cut your fashion fabric and make a dress from your new pattern, make it in muslin fabric. You don't need to include the zipper, facings, or any finishing details. Draw any changes to the design directly on the muslin with tailor's chalk. Once you are satisfied with the muslin, transfer your notes onto the draft and then redraw your final pattern.

What's a Sloper?

A sloper is a basic pattern template that represents the shape and size of your body. It is used as the starting point for making garments with consistent fit. A dress sloper represents one half of the garment front and one half of the garment back. A sleeve sloper represents an entire sleeve.

Drafting your own custom-size sloper takes some careful attention up front, but once you have a sloper that makes up into a perfect-fitting muslin, you won't need to measure again or test the fit of a dress every time you draft a new pattern.

Unlike patterns, which are made from pattern paper, slopers are best made in cardstock to minimize wear and tear. You want your slopers to be sturdy and long lasting, as well as easy to trace.

This book contains three basic dress slopers (shift, sheath, and princess) and two sleeve options (set-in and raglan) that you can use to make all the dresses in this book. Notice the armhole options on the dress slopers, which match up with different sleeve types. The provided slopers are graded in sizes XS to XL. If your body measurements are close to the ones listed in the size chart on page 34, you can simply trace your size sloper onto cardstock. If you don't see a sloper that is close to your size and shape, you can custom-make your own. Directions for both are coming up!

To download the Sloper PDFs go to page 200.

Tracing the Slopers Provided

If you are fortunate enough to have fairly standard body measurements, you can simply trace all of the slopers provided. The directions that follow are for a shift sloper with a set-in sleeve, but the same steps work for all the slopers.

NEED IT

- Cardstock
- Shift sloper and set-in sleeve sloper
- Removable tape, pins, or weights
- Dressmaker's tracing paper
- Tracing wheel
- Pencil

DO IT

1 **SET UP THE MATERIALS.** Place cardstock (page 18) large enough to trace the provided slopers on your work surface. You might need to tape two or more pieces of cardstock together. Depending on your work surface, you can tape, pin, or weight the cardstock to keep it from moving. Tape the four corners of the sloper that you wish to trace onto the cardstock.

2 **TRACE THE PROVIDED SLOPERS.** Slip the tracing paper (page 21), colored side down, in between the sloper and the cardstock. Trace the correct sloper size by pressing the tracing wheel over the lines of the correct size; this transfers a dotted line onto the cardstock. Then trace the grainline arrow, darts, and dart center with the tracing paper and wheel or a sharp or mechanical pencil. Be sure to trace the correct armhole to match the sleeve you have chosen, in this case the set-in sleeve.

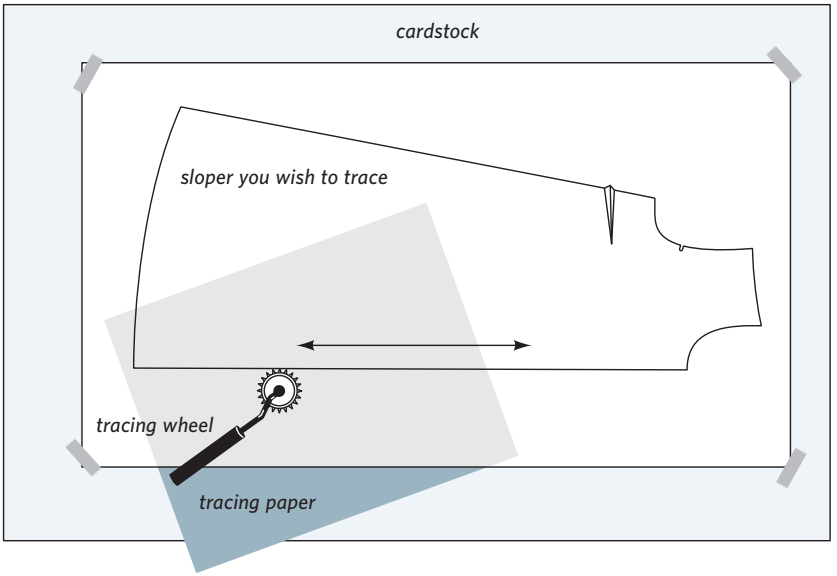
Double-check that all the important design lines and markings did transfer onto the cardstock. If everything transferred, remove the provided sloper and tracing paper. You should find a transferred dotted version of the sloper on your cardstock.

Tracing Tips

- Dressmaker's tracing paper comes in small sizes. You will never have a big enough piece to cover the whole pattern. This is not a problem; simply move the tracing paper around the pattern as you trace.
- I don't always use tracing paper. As you get comfortable with tracing, you can eliminate the tracing paper and trace with only the wheel. Then, use a pencil to mark over the dots created by the wheel. The colored tracing paper merely makes the dots easier to see.

3 **RETRACE OVER THE DOTTED LINES.** Draw over the dotted design lines, darts, notches, and any other pattern markings with a pencil to make them clear. Make sure to draw the grainline arrow parallel to the center front or center back of the sloper. Cut out your personal cardstock sloper along the marked lines.

4 **LABEL THE SLOPERS** with the date, type of sloper (shift, sheath, or princess), your name, and the size.



Making a Custom-Fit Sloper

This example demonstrates how to adjust the fit of the provided sheath sloper to match your specific body measurements. I chose the sheath (with a set-in sleeve) because it is fitted, so you will learn how to make correct alterations to the bust, waist, and hip. You can then use these same instructions to adapt and custom-fit the other two dress slopers as needed. The first part of the process is the same as tracing the sloper (see page 39).

NEED IT

- Cardstock
- Sheath sloper and set-in sleeve sloper
- Removable tape, pins, or weights
- Dressmaker's tracing paper
- Tracing wheel
- Pencil
- Your measurements (see page 37)
- Straight ruler
- French curve
- About 2 yards of muslin fabric

DO IT

1 **TRACE THE PROVIDED SLOPERS.** Follow steps 1–3 on pages 39 and 40, but don't cut out the sloper yet; wait until you have made all the necessary fit adjustments.

2 **MAKE FIT ADJUSTMENTS.** Check your specs against the size of the sloper you traced; refer to the standard size chart provided on page 34. You can fill in the chart on page 42 to keep track of the differences. Many simple circumference fit adjustments can be made at the side seam. See the section on grading your sloper for detailed fit adjustments (see page 43).

3 **MAKE A MUSLIN.** Once you have made all the fit adjustments, use your new front, back, and sleeve slopers to make a test muslin (see page 52). Make the necessary changes to the muslin, then tear out the stitches and iron the pieces flat. Trace the muslin pieces (minus seam allowances) onto cardstock.

4 **LABEL THE SLOPERS.** Label your slopers with the style of the sloper (shift, sheath, princess, set-in, raglan), your name, and size, as well as the grainline, darts, and notches. If the slopers are messy, trace the important design lines onto clean cardstock and label the new sloper.

CHART FOR ADJUSTING SPECS

SPECS	MY SPECS	SLOPER SPECS	ADJUSTMENT NEEDED
Ⓐ Bust			
Ⓑ Front chest/back chest	/	/	/
Ⓒ Apex from center front			
Ⓓ Neck to apex			
Ⓔ Waist			
Ⓕ Front waist/back waist	/	/	/
Ⓖ Neck to waist, front/ neck to waist, back	/	/	/
Ⓗ Low waist			
Ⓘ Front low waist/back low waist	/	/	/
Ⓙ Hips			
Ⓚ Front hips/back hips	/	/	/
Ⓛ Neck to hip			
Ⓜ Shoulder width			
Ⓝ Length desired			
Ⓞ Upper arm			
Ⓟ Wrist			
Ⓠ Overarm length (set-in)			
Ⓡ Overarm length (raglan)			
Ⓢ Underarm length			
Ⓣ Sleeve cap height, front/ sleeve cap height, back	/	/	/

Grading Slopers

Grading is the process by which you adjust the measurements of a sloper to make it either bigger or smaller. Many simple fit adjustments can be made at the side seams of the front and back slopers. In some cases — when working with the sheath, for instance — it may make more sense to increase or decrease at the waist or bust darts. You'll see where you need to make adjustments when you try on your muslin.

One thing to keep in mind is that you need to make corresponding changes to both the front and the back slopers. For instance, if you increase the width of the shoulder seam on the front dress sloper, do the same with the back shoulder seam. If you change the length of the armhole on the dress front or back, you'll need to make the same change on the sleeve cap.

Since you will be changing the shape of the slopers, do not trace onto cardstock or cut them out until all the fit adjustments are made. Here are some common fit adjustments that you might need to make to custom-fit your sloper.

Bust Adjustments

The bust area of your dress should be comfortable, without "pulls" (which indicate the dress is too tight) or "extra fabric" (indicating the dress is too big).

Increase or Decrease Bust Circumference at Side Seams

Reducing or increasing the bust circumference at the side seams of the front and back slopers is an easy alteration. If your measurement is 2" more or less than the sloper bust measurement, you should choose the next size sloper. If the sloper bust is too large, check whether the excess is in the front or the back, and reduce accordingly. Similarly, if the bust is too small only in the front but is fitting nicely in the back, only increase the front sloper width as shown. Here's what you do:

1 **TRACE** the front sloper and back sloper, in the size you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex.

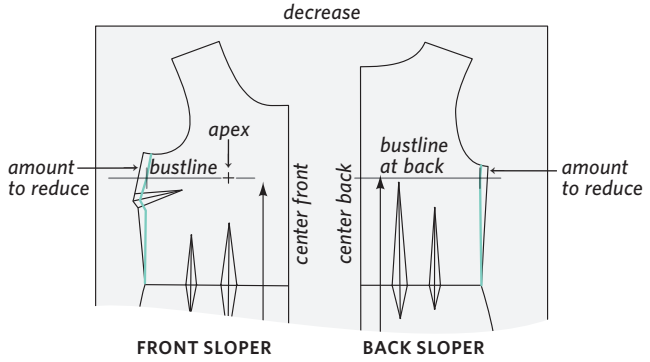
2 **REFER** to your measurement chart (page 37) for your bust measurement. Subtract your bust measurement from the sloper measurement to get the measurement you need to decrease bust circumference. (Add your bust measurement to the sloper measurement if you are increasing bust circumference).

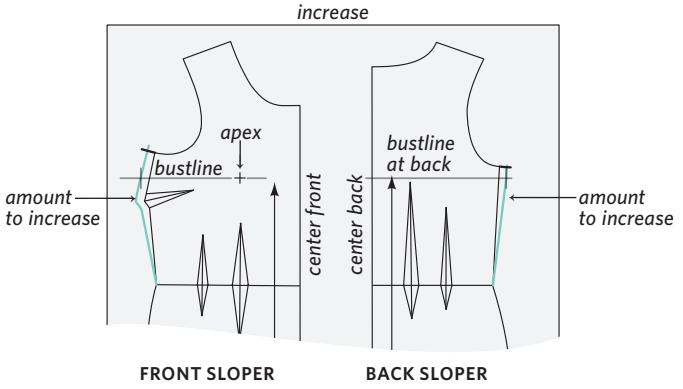
3 **DIVIDE** the resulting measurement by 4 (if you are doing a balanced increase/decrease for the front and back). This is how much you need to take from the front and the back at the side seams. Remember you are working on a half front and half back.

4 **MARK** the measurement from step 3 at the bustline: if you are increasing the bust size, mark outside the existing side seam. If you are decreasing the bust size, mark inside the existing side seam.

5 **DRAW** new side seams from underarm to the new marks, and then blend to the waistline on both front and back slopers. Use your straight ruler to draw new side seams from the armhole to the waist. Use a curved ruler to blend the waistline so it is not a sharp edge.

6 **TRACE** the altered slopers (front and back) onto cardstock and label the new slopers (page 56).





Move the Apex Point of the Dart

If your apex point (page 35) is either higher or lower than the apex indicated on the sloper, the length and direction of the bust darts will be off on the garment. Think of your apex as the point to where the darts should be pointing. This is an easy adjustment.

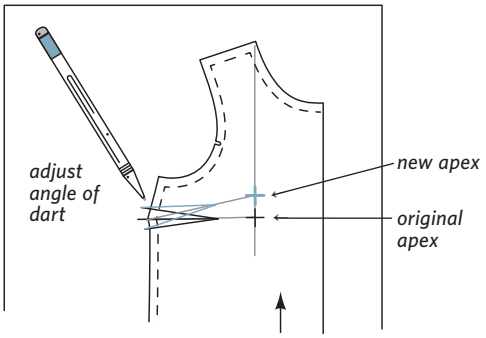
1 **TRACE** the front sloper, in the size you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex.

2 **REFER** to your measurements for "D: neck to apex" (page 37). Use this measurement in step 3.

3 **ALIGN** your ruler from the neckline high shoulder point on the sloper to the original apex. Mark the measurement from step 2 along the alignment to indicate the new apex.

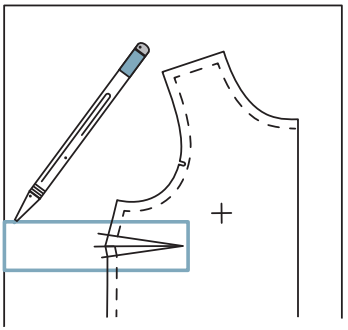
4 **DRAW** a new dart. Use a ruler to draw a same-size dart, changing the line of the dart legs so the point of the dart points to the new apex. Don't change the position of the dart legs at the side seam.

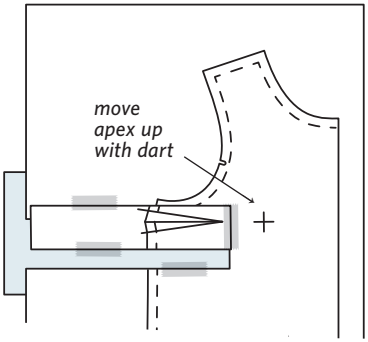
5 **TRACE** the altered sloper onto cardstock and label the new sloper.



Move the Entire Bust Dart Up or Down

Your bust darts give shape to the dress and need to point toward the center of the apex. When fitting the muslin, if the dart is pointing above or below the apex, you should move the dart accordingly. You can move the entire bust dart by cutting out the dart and moving it higher or lower. The shape of the dart at the side seam will be affected, so you will need to redraw the side seam after you have moved the dart. This will not, however, affect the shape or length of the actual side seam, nor should it. The example shows moving the dart up, but the process is the same for moving it down.





1 **TRACE** the sloper front, in the size you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex.

2 **DRAW** a box around the dart. Cut out the box.

3 **MOVE** the dart to the desired location and tape it in place with removable tape.

4 **TAPE** extra pattern paper behind the hole left by the cutout.

5 **FOLD** the dart closed (see Closing a Dart below) and use your ruler to redraw the side seam.

6 **TRACE** over the side seam with the tracing wheel, and with dart still closed to get the true shape of the dart. Unfold the dart to see the shape of the dart in the new location.

7 **TRACE** the altered sloper onto cardstock and label the new sloper.

Closing a Dart

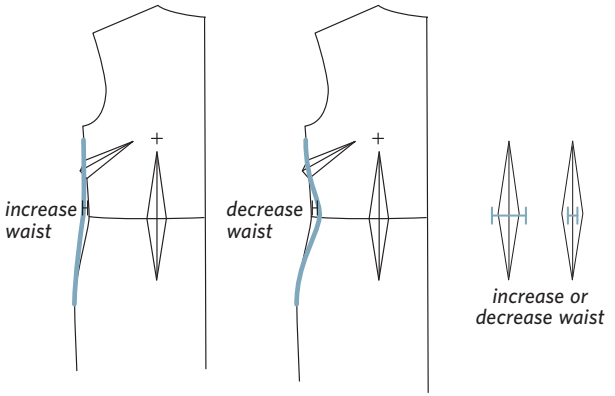
When working with your drafts, you will often be directed to close a dart drawn on pattern paper. To do this, crease the paper along the centerline of the dart, bringing the dart "legs" together as if they are sewn. If needed, tape the "seam" with removable tape, then use your tracing wheel as needed to record the shape of the pattern with a closed dart.

Waist Adjustments

The aim of the game when making changes to the waistline is to avoid adding or subtracting too much from the side seam, in order to maintain the original curve of the sloper. For the sheath, you do this by dividing the changes between the side seam and the waist darts. To increase circumference, you need to move the side seam out and make one of the two darts smaller. To decrease circumference, you need to take the side seam in and make one of the two darts larger.

Increase or Decrease Waist Circumference

You can improve the fit of the sheath and princess seam dresses with a simple waistline alteration. The shift doesn't have waist definition, so you don't need to adapt the waist on that sloper. The example below shows the sheath sloper.



1 TRACE the front and back dress sheath sloper, in the size that you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex.

2 DIVIDE the total amount you want to increase or decrease by 4. Then, divide again by 2 for the amount you need to divide between the side seam and the dart.

3 INCREASE OR DECREASE the width of the dart at the opening by half the measurement from step 2. For either adjustment, make sure that you measure from the center of the dart outward, so that the dart remains balanced. Blend the new dart width between the top and the bottom of the dart points with a straight ruler. If you need to *add* room at the waist, *decrease* the size of the dart. Conversely if you wish to *take in* the waist, *increase* the size of the dart.

4 ADJUST THE SIDE SEAM one-half the measurement from step 2. Make the addition or subtraction at the side seam. Use your curved ruler to blend the new side seam.

5 TRACE the altered slopers onto cardstock and label the new slopers.

Adjust the Waist on a Princess Seam Sloper

Alter the waist on the princess seam sloper the same way as the sheath sloper, by either adding or subtracting at the waistline from both the side seam and the princess seam. This can be done when you want to add or subtract no more than a total of 2" at the waist. If you need a greater adjustment, use the next size up or down.

Hip Adjustment

The following adjustment to the sheath or princess seam slopers can be done when you want to increase or decrease the total hip circumference no more then 2". If you need a greater adjustment, use the next size up or down. The amount of the decrease or increase is divided and distributed in a similar manner as for the waist (see opposite page). For a shift dress, you can increase or decrease the hip area at the side seams only.

Increase or Decrease Hip Circumference

Taking in or letting out a dress around the hips is a simple fit adjustment. You may need to adjust the front only, the back only, or both the front and back, depending on how the muslin is fitting.

An adjustment does not need to be made to the front sloper if, for example, the dress is too big at the back — simply adjust the back. A dress form makes it easy to see if the side seam is falling correctly.

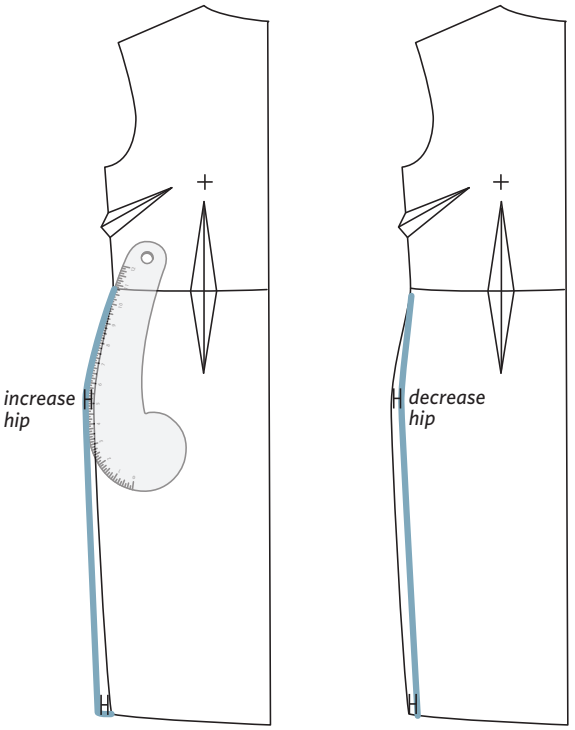
1 **TRACE** the necessary sloper(s), in the size that you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, apex, and the grainline arrow. The illustration shows changes to the front sloper only.

2 **DIVIDE** the total amount you want to increase or decrease by 4, if you are making changes to both front and back slopers. Divide by 2 if you are only adjusting the front or back sloper.

3 **INCREASE OR DECREASE** the side seam at the hipline (the widest point on the sloper) by the amount figured in step 3 on the necessary sloper(s).

4 **BLEND** the new side seam from the hip to the waist with a curved ruler and from the hip to the hem with a straight line, using a straight ruler.

5 **TRACE** the altered sloper(s) onto cardstock and label the new sloper(s).

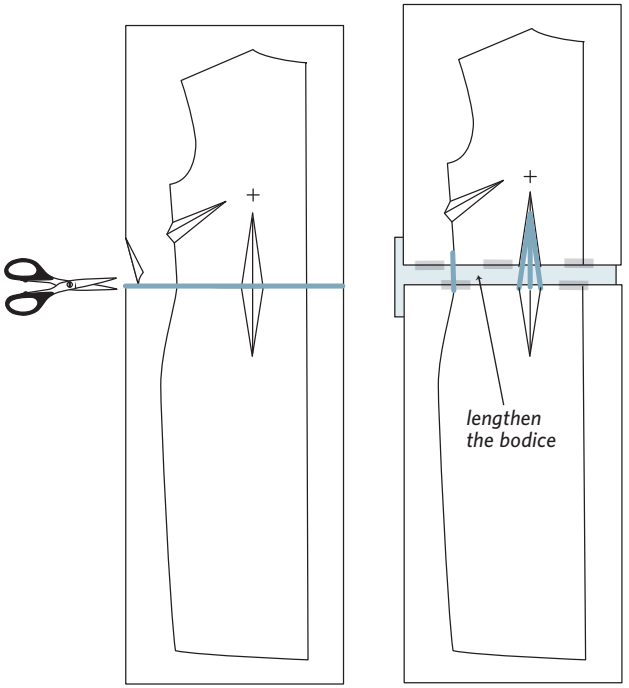


Bodice Length

Some women have a longer or shorter torso than the slopers provided. This alteration isn't necessary on the shift sloper, but is an easy alteration on the sheath and princess slopers. Compare your front and back bodice length measurements (neck to waist) to the sloper you are adjusting to determine the adjustment amount. Adjust the length of both the front and the back.

Lengthen the Bodice

1 **TRACE** the front and back slopers, in the size that you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex. The illustration shows changes to the front sloper only, but both the back and front slopers can be adjusted in the same way.



2 **DRAW** a horizontal line straight across the waistline.

3 **CUT** the pattern in half along that line and separate the top and bottom pieces by the desired length adjustment.

4 **SLIP** extra pattern paper, wide enough to cover the difference, beneath the two pieces.

5 **TAPE** the lengthened slopers onto the extra pattern paper.

6 **REDRAW** the side seam so that you have a smooth line. Redraw the darts, keeping them the same width, and extending the original lines over the new paper. Make sure to match the length and shape of the front and back side seams.

7 **TRACE** the altered slopers onto cardstock and label them.

Shorten the Bodice

1 **TRACE** the slopers, in the size that you want to adapt, onto pattern paper. Include darts, grainline arrow, and apex. The illustration shows changes to the front sloper only, but both the back and front slopers can be adjusted in the same way.

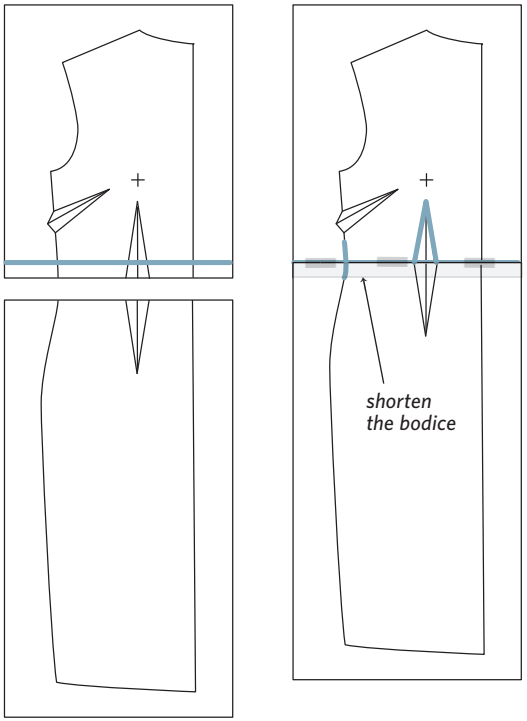
2 **DRAW** a straight horizontal line across the waistline.

3 **MEASURE** from the drawn line up (on the top half of the pattern) by the amount you want to shorten the bodice.

4 **CUT** the pattern across the bottom line and tape it to the top horizontal line (the new raised waistline). This adjustment should be the same for both the center front and center back. Adjust the side seams equally.

5 **REDRAW** the darts and the side seam, maintaining the original width of the waist.

6 **TRACE** the altered slopers onto cardstock and label them.



Sleeve Adjustments

This book comes with a basic set-in sleeve sloper and a raglan sleeve sloper. If you do not make any changes to the shape of the armholes of the dress slopers, the sleeve slopers will work with any of the dress silhouettes of the same size. Most set-in and raglan sleeve adjustments involve the length and width of the sleeve, although some set-in sleeves might need some adjustment to the sleeve cap. We do all come in different shapes and sizes, so there is nothing wrong with you if you need to change something that isn't fitting right.

Our arms, like our bodies, are unique, with different lengths and widths. Comparing your arm measurements (see page 37) to the sloper measurements will give you a good idea if the basic sleeve sloper will fit. You can also make a test muslin of just the sleeve to see how it feels and fits. If it seems that the basic sleeve sloper isn't quite right, fit adjustments aren't difficult and they make a big difference in the look and comfort of the dress.

The raglan sleeve is different from the set-in sleeve because it is actually part of the bodice and forms part of the neckline, omitting the armhole altogether. Raglan sleeves are easier to adjust than the set-in sleeves as long as the seam lengths of the sleeves match the dress seams.

Remember, if you made any fit adjustments to the shape or length of the armholes of the front and/or back dress slopers, you will need to make the same adjustments to the sleeve slopers.

Adjust Sleeve Cap Height for Set-in Sleeve

If you made any changes to the length of the armhole seam on either the front or back dress sloper, you will need to change to the shape of the sleeve cap accordingly. Note, however, that the sleeve cap seam is 1" longer than the total armhole. You need that extra 1" to create the three-dimensional shape of the sleeve.

1 **TRACE** the set-in sleeve sloper, in the size that matches your dress, onto pattern paper; use the same size sleeve as dress slopers for minimal changes. Include the grainline arrow and notches.

2 **COMPARE** your own sleeve cap height measurements (see page 37) to the sleeve cap on your sloper. Adjust the sleeve cap to the desired length to match your body. If your front (or back) armhole measurement is less than that of the sloper, make the sleeve cap shorter by drawing in a new sleeve cap just below the original top of the sleeve cap (under the shoulder seam notch). Conversely, if your measurement is greater than the sloper, draw a new sleeve cap slightly above the original one to make the armhole a bit longer.

> **NOTE:** *The front sleeve cap is more curved than the back. If you look at your dress patterns you will see that the back armhole is straighter, which is why the sleeve cap on the back of the sleeve is also straighter.*

3 **CHECK THE FIT** of the altered sloper by making a muslin sleeve (see page 52). Make any adjustments and transfer the adjustments onto the sloper.

4 **LABEL** the sloper with the date, pattern name, and size. Mark the grainline and the front and back notches on the sleeve cap. The front has one notch in the middle of the front of the sleeve cap and the back has two. Use these notches to ease the sleeve cap during construction.

Adjust Set-in Sleeve Length

It is easy to turn this sloper into a shorter sleeve, since you have both the elbow length and the bicep line clearly marked on the sloper. It is simply a question of deciding how long you want your sleeves.

1 **TRACE** the set-in sleeve sloper in the size that you want to adapt onto pattern paper and draw in a new length. Remember that the set-in sleeve height is 1" greater than the total armhole seam.

2 **ADD** hem allowance to the new design line (1" for a ½" double-fold hem) and then cut off the bottom of the sleeve sloper at the new bottom edge.

Adjust Sleeve Circumference

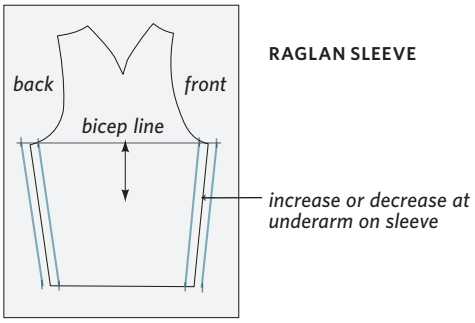
It is easy to make any sleeve narrower or wider. Trace the sloper onto pattern paper and make the adjustments to the paper pattern. Once you are sure they are correct, trace them back onto cardstock.

1 **COMPARE** your O and P measurements from page 37 to the sleeve slope. Decide how much you want to increase or decrease the sleeve at the wrist or bicep area. Do add 1" to your arm measurement for wearing ease regardless of whether you are making the pattern smaller or larger.

2 **FOR THE RAGLAN SLEEVE,** add or remove equal amounts of the desired measurement to each side of the underarm seam at the wrist or at the bicep line.

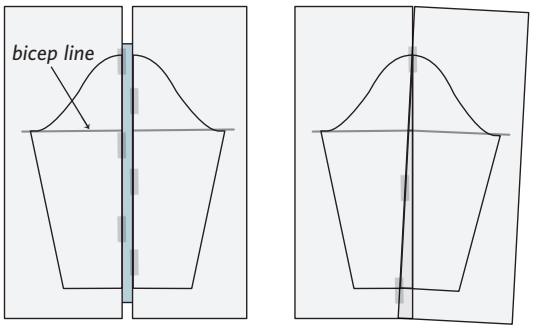
3 **FOR THE SET-IN SLEEVE,** make the adjustment at the center grainline arrow. Cut along the grain and either spread the pattern or overlap it the desired amount at the bicep area and/or wrist, but do not change the sleeve cap, or you will have to adjust the dress slopers.

NOTE: *If you make the change at the bicep line, but you are happy with the armhole circumference, then adjust the length of the sleeve cap to match your armholes.*



RAGLAN SLEEVE

SET-IN SLEEVE



increase spread

decrease spread

Adjust Raglan Sleeve to Match Dress

If you change your front and back raglan dress slopers around the sleeve or neckline, then you must change your raglan sleeve sloper, too, since the sleeve forms part of the neckline.

1 **TRACE** the raglan sleeve sloper in the size that you want to adapt onto pattern paper.

2 **TO ADJUST THE SLEEVE SEAMS,** measure the seams on the front and back raglan dress slopers that align with the sleeve seams. Adjust the length of the sleeves to match the dress slopers.

3 **CHECK THE FIT** of the altered sloper by making a muslin of both the dress and the sleeve (see page 52). Make any adjustments, and transfer the adjustments onto the sloper.

4 **LABEL** the sloper with the date, pattern name, and size. Notch all pattern pieces. Even though the back and the front of the raglan sleeve look very different and distinct, it is still a good idea to notch the front and back: the front has one and the back has two notches.

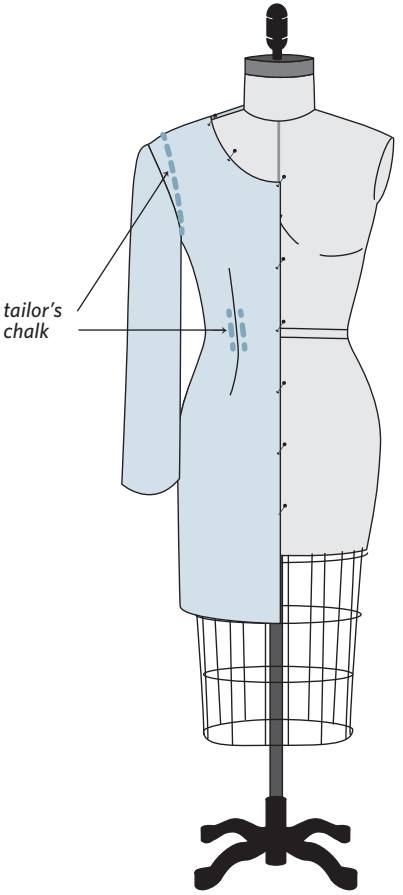
Making a Muslin

Dressmakers test the shape and fit of a sloper by making a mock-up from fabric, usually inexpensive muslin. It can take more than one muslin to get the fit right. Remember, the sloper doesn't have seam allowances, so be sure to add ½" to all the pattern piece edges that will be stitched together.

If you're using a dress form, you only need to make half of the front, half of the back, and one sleeve to test the fit. Make only the right side of the dress, which is to the left when you are looking at your dress form. The center front and the center back on a dress form each have a seam that runs down the length of it, so you can pin the center front and center back right onto those seams.

If you do not have a dress form, then I suggest you make the whole dress and one sleeve so you can try it on to judge the fit. If you are working with a fitted silhouette, stitch the shoulder and side seams together, but leave one side seam open enough to allow you to try on the muslin. Ask a friend to help perfect the fit by pinning areas where there is too much volume or by marking areas that might be too tight with tailor's chalk, which is nearly impossible to do accurately yourself.

If the shape and fit of the muslin is good, then no changes need to be made to the slopers. If changes are necessary, mark them directly on the muslin with tailor's chalk. If your muslin needs to be taken in, then you can easily reduce the size of the pattern. If your muslin is too tight in certain places, this means that you need to add to the pattern. Many standard alterations were explained in the previous section. You might have already made the alterations based on measurements and now in the muslin stage you can make sure they were accurate.



For example, if your dress is too snug around your hips, open up the side seam and measure how much more fabric is needed between the front and back seams. Add that measurement to the muslin after you take it off yourself or the dress form. You then need to transfer these new markings back onto your draft, in a process known as truing.

1 **SEAM-RIP** the marked muslin, and iron it flat.

2 **PLACE** the muslin pieces on top of plain pattern paper, with tracing paper between the two layers, using weights, tape, or pins to hold it in place.

3 **TRACE** the muslin as you did the slopers, using your tracing wheel to transfer the new seamlines and darts onto the pattern paper.

Once you have traced the muslin onto pattern paper and cleaned up the lines, then you are ready to trace this final sloper draft onto cardstock. Or, if you are working on a draft for one of the dresses in the book, your next step after finalizing the muslin is to trace the patterns from the draft.

Drafting Patterns

There is a lot of new information in this section. I suggest taking a quick look, but don't worry about anything you don't understand immediately. As you start making the dresses, things will begin to make sense. You can always refer back to these pages for a refresher.

Now that you have made your sloper, it's time to start drafting dresses. Each of the dresses in this book includes step-by-step pattern and dressmaking instructions; however, as a general guide, there are several basic steps common to all patternmaking. There is also important labeling that you should add to your finished patterns (see page 56).

The first step to drafting is to decide on the sloper style. Then decide if you are going to use the set-in sleeve or the raglan sleeve.

Trace the sloper onto patternmaking paper, including the darts, grainline arrow, and apex. This becomes the draft to which you add new design lines for the dresses in this book. If the draft changes dramatically, or to be sure you like the way your design fits, you might want to make a muslin from the draft. If so, trace and label the draft to make pattern pieces, add seam allowances (see page 56), cut out the pieces, and sew the muslin.

If you like the fit and appearance of the muslin, then your pattern pieces are ready and do not need to be changed. Then you can draft the facings. If not, adjust the draft and retrace the pattern pieces. For more about these steps, read on.

Draft Facings

A facing is a piece of fabric that you sew on the inside of a garment to finish the raw edges. Facings are best suited to finish curved seams where a hem would be difficult or impossible, such as around the neckline and armholes on sleeveless or collarless dresses, or on a dress without a lining. A facing can also help strengthen a bias cut edge and prevent it from stretching, as for the princess seam strapless dresses, and it can support straight edges such as the button *placket* on the *The Captain's Shirt Dress* on page 108. Most facings are strengthened with fusible interfacing, which is available in different weights and comes in black and white.

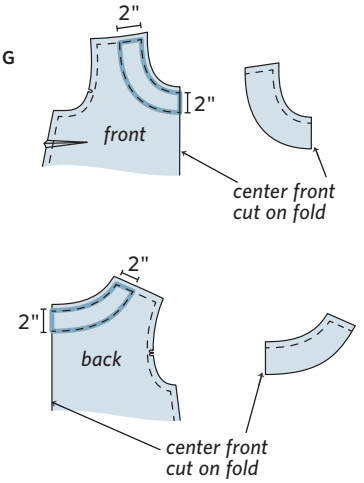
I use several different types of facings in this book, including shaped facings (separate or combined) and bias facings. Bias facings involve the use of bias tape and don't need to be drafted. Here's how you draft the others. Instructions for sewing facings start on page 184.

Shaped Facings for Set-in Sleeve Dresses

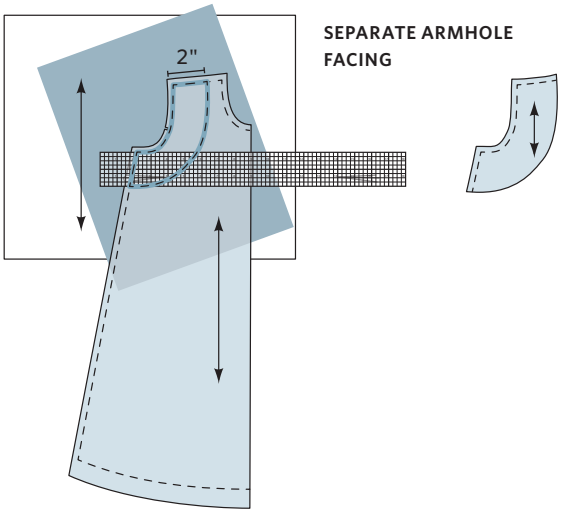
A shaped facing is a separate piece of fabric that duplicates the neckline or armhole of a dress. The pattern for the facing is traced from the original dress pattern onto pattern paper. Shaped neckline and armhole facing pieces can either be made separately or can be combined as one piece. Separate facings are probably the best choice for beginners as they are the easiest to draft and sew.

SEPARATE NECKLINE FACINGS. Starting with your dress front sloper, draft a 2"-wide front neck facing by tracing the neckline and shoulder line onto a separate piece of pattern paper. Then measure 2" from the traced neckline at several places to create the bottom edge. If the garment is to be cut on the fabric fold, mark the facing to be cut the same as the garment. Add ½" seam allowance to the neckline and shoulder seam edges. Seam allowance isn't necessary on the bottom edge of the facing. Repeat with the dress back sloper to make the back neckline facing. Cut out and label the pieces.

SEPARATE NECKLINE FACING



SEPARATE ARMHOLE FACING



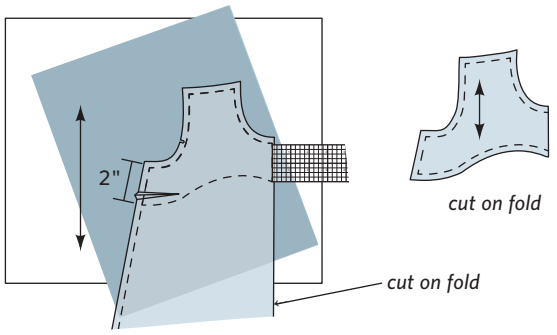
SEPARATE ARMHOLE FACINGS. Starting with your front dress sloper, draft a 2"-wide armhole facing by tracing the armhole from the shoulder seam to the side seam onto a separate piece of pattern paper. Then measure 2" from the traced armhole, making sure to trace the armhole front notch also. Add ½" seam allowance to the side seam edges. Do the same with the dress back sloper to make the back armhole facing. Cut out and label the pieces.

Planning Around a Zipper

If you will be installing a zipper in the center back, you need to add seam allowance to that edge, on both the dress pattern and the facing pattern. You will then cut two facing pieces instead of one piece on the fold.

COMBINATION FACING. A combination facing combines the neckline and armhole facings into one piece. Starting with your dress front sloper, draft a 2"-wide facing for both the neckline and underarm onto a separate piece of pattern paper by tracing the armhole from side seam to shoulder, then across the shoulder seam, and finally around the neckline. Then measure 2" from the traced armhole and neckline for as much as you can; for the shoulder area just create a nice curved line to connect the lines and create one facing. Add ½" seam allowance to all edges that will be sewn. Do the same with the dress back sloper to make the back combination facing. Cut out and label the pieces.

COMBINATION FACING



Shaped Neckline Facings for Raglan Sleeve Dresses

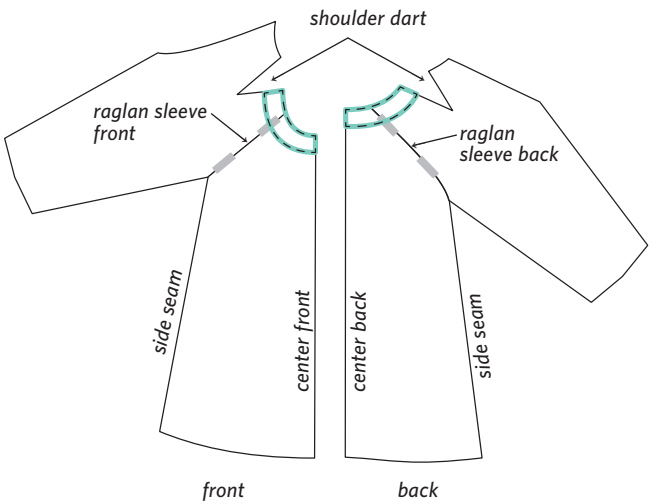
Neckline facings for a dress with raglan sleeves are a little bit tricky because half of each neckline is on the top of the raglan sleeve. Here's what you do:

1 **USE** removable tape to temporarily attach the dress front sloper to the raglan sleeve front edge.

2 **TRACE** a 2"-wide facing along the neckline, from the center front to the shoulder dart.

3 **REMOVE** the sleeve and repeat with the back dress sloper and raglan sleeve back edge.

4 **ADD** seam allowance as needed (see next page). Label and cut out the pieces.



Seam and Hem Allowance

Both your slopers and your drafts do not, and should not, include seam allowance. This is because they are easier to adjust for fit, to add design features, and to trace without seam allowance. When you are ready to make your final pattern pieces, measure ½" out from each garment edge that will be seamed. A clear plastic ruler is perfect for this task. Do not add seam allowance to any edges, such as the center front or center back, that will be cut on the fabric fold.

For all the dresses in this book, simply add 1" to the hem edge for a ½" double-fold hem (see page 188). If you prefer a wider hem or other type of hem, simply adjust the amount you add to the pattern for the hem. It's also a good idea to mark the hem allowance on the drafts, patterns, and slopers, so you don't forget. I keep a 1" hem allowance on all of my slopers.

Double-Check that All Seams Match

Once you have finished drafting your pattern pieces and adding all your design elements and seam allowances, make sure that all the seams that will be joined are the same length. Sometimes during pattern drafting, it's easy to forget that you need to make the same changes to all adjoining dress pieces. It only takes a minute to double-check at this stage, but it can be a costly mistake if you cut out your fabric with one seamline too short. Simply position all adjoining seams together and check that they match and that the notches align. Make any adjustments as needed.

Label Finished Patterns

If you've worked with commercial patterns, you'll have noticed that they come marked with all kinds of information, such as the name of each piece, how many pieces to cut, where to cut on the fabric fold, and so on. When you make your own patterns labeling them in a similar way will help you organize and cut patterns properly. Clear cutting information will mean you can work quickly and effectively. And since you will probably use your patterns more than once, good labeling will help you know if the sizing needs to be revisited (depending on the original date you created it), as well as refresh your memory on the number and type of pieces.

Throw away any patterns that don't fit well. I guarantee you will not be using them and they will only clutter your space.

Standard information, explained below, to mark on all your patterns:

- Date
- Dress/pattern name (example: Shift and Shout)
- Size of pattern
- Name of the pattern piece (example: dress front, dress back)
- Assigned pattern piece number and total (example: 1 out of 5 pieces)
- How many pieces to cut (example: cut 2 from fabric, 2 from lining, 1 from interfacing)
- Grainline arrow
- Instruction to "cut on fold," where needed
- Notches, darts, apex
- Hem allowance (optional to add onto sloper)

Cutting on the Fold

With symmetrical designs, such as a dress front that is identical on both sides, it saves time, space, and money to make only half of the sloper and/or pattern. The center front of the pattern will be placed on the folded edge of fabric along the lengthwise grain (read more about this in Cutting Layouts, page 58). Label the center front and the center back with the words "cut on fold" unless there is a zipper or opening, in which case add seam allowance and a zipper notch as needed.

Darts

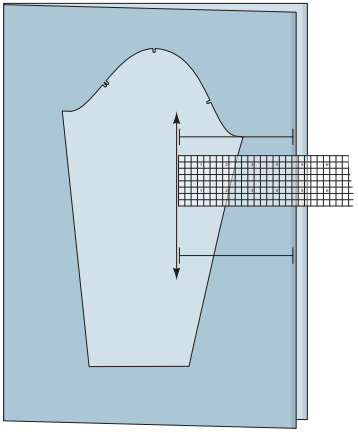
Darts give a dress shape, making a flat piece of fabric three-dimensional. The shift dress (see page 62) is the most loosely fitted of the three slopers in this book, with only bust darts at the side seams. The sheath dress (see page 100) has long vertical darts at the front and back waist, which gives the dress a fitted shape. The princess sloper has vertical seams in place of darts to create its fitted shape.

Grainline

As explained on page 9, you want to be aware of the direction of the fabric grainline. Your pattern should include a grainline arrow that helps you align the fabric with the straight grain or the bias. Use your ruler to measure from the selvage to the top and bottom of the arrow (see illustration above right), to ensure that both ends are the same distance from the selvage.

Notches

Notches are important little marks made in the seam allowances to assist you in assembling the dress pieces. A single notch is used for front pieces and a double notch is used for back pieces. Corresponding notches are made in places such as the armholes and the sleeves to indicate where the pieces should line up.



Measure from grainline to selvage, at both top and bottom of grainline arrow. Both distances should be the same.

Use a pattern notcher (page 20) to make these tiny clips into the pattern. Here are some of the places where notches should be marked:

- **CENTER FRONT AND CENTER BACK.** Since the front and back pattern pieces are each only half of the dress, it is a good idea to notch the center front and center back at the neckline and hem. This reference helps you know where the center of the garment is, to check that the fit is correct, for example, when attaching a facing to a neckline.

- **DARTS.** You can only notch darts that are at seam edges, such as bust darts. Mark notches on either side of the dart and at the center. Then, when you sew them, you'll know exactly how they are meant to fold.

- **HEM.** It is a good idea to notch the hem allowance, so when it is time to hem the dress you remember how much fabric you allowed for a hem.

- **MATCHING UP PATTERN PIECES.** When working with multiple pattern pieces, use one notch to match up front pieces and two notches for the back pieces that are meant to be sewn together. Be consistent to avoid confusion.

- **PLEATS AND GATHERS.** It's useful to have notches along the seam allowances where each of these begins and ends.

- **SEAM ALLOWANCE.** I recommend that beginners notch their seam allowance at the corners, just until they are used to matching up pieces and sewing seams together.

- **SET-IN SLEEVES.** Notches are essential when matching up concave and convex curves. Notch the center top edge of the sleeve to mark shoulder seam placement, then notch halfway to the underarm seam on both sides, using double notches for the back sleeve and back dress (see page 189).

- **WAISTLINE.** Marking the waistline on the front and back patterns at the side seams will help you pin the front and back pieces together. If problems do occur, it is easier to troubleshoot when you have notches in place so you can see where things have gone wrong.

- **ZIPPER PLACEMENT.** Notch the point on the seam where the zipper ends. For example, if the zipper runs 6" down the center back, make a notch 6" down from the neckline (obviously not including the seam allowance). This will help you place both sides of the zipper accurately.

Cutting Layouts

When you are ready to position the patterns on your fabric, think about the best way to do this without wasting fabric. The ideal solution will depend on how many pieces you have, the direction of the grainline on the patterns, and the width of your fabric.

Always begin with a nice flat surface for cutting. I like to work on the floor, mainly because I don't have an awesomely wonderful big table. But it is much easier to work up on a table. Just be sure that the surface is big enough to lay out the whole pattern without having the fabric falling off the edge and pulling the fabric off grain.

Lengthwise vs. Crosswise

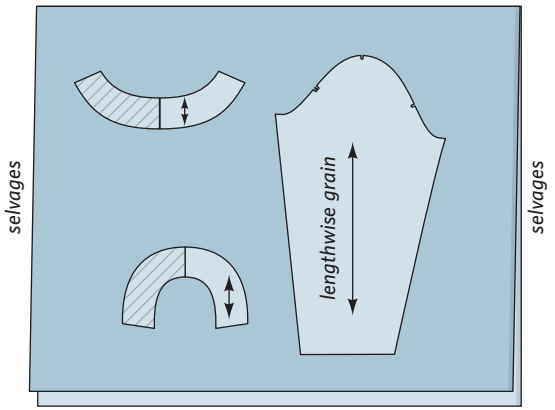
There are two different ways you can fold your fabric, either lengthwise or crosswise.

A crosswise fold is good for:

- cutting two smaller pieces of the same pattern, for example a sleeve or a collar
- fabric that doesn't have a print or a nap, which means that the pieces can be cut in opposite directions

A lengthwise fold is good for:

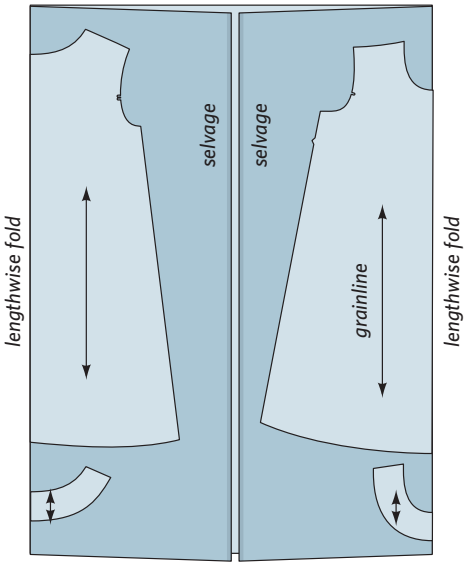
- pattern pieces that need to be cut on a fabric fold
- fabric that has a print, because the pattern pieces will need to be matched at major seams
- fabric with a nap, so the nap runs in the same direction the same on all pieces; this requires that all pieces be cut in the same direction.

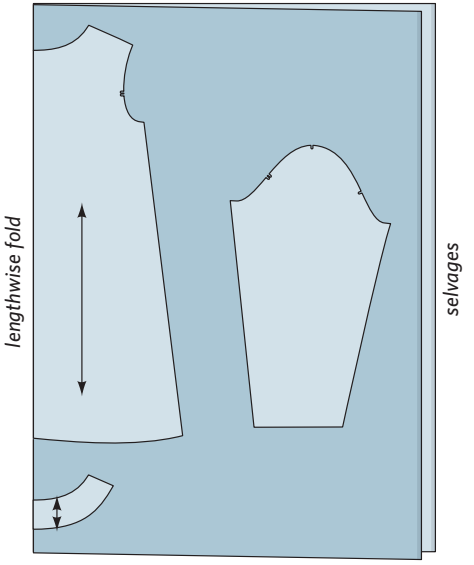


CROSSWISE FOLD

For pieces designed to be cut on the fold, you can "mirror" them by tracing one side, flipping it over and lining up the center, and tracing the other side. This is represented in the illustration by shading half of the piece.

LENGTHWISE FOLD
(2 options)





Cutting a Pattern from Fabric

Now that you're familiar with the terms, let's put it all together while I walk you through the process. Even experienced sewers might learn some new tricks.

NEED IT

- Fabric
- A pattern
- Ruler
- Pins
- Weight(s) (optional)
- Tailor's chalk
- Fabric scissors

DO IT

1 **PREP YOUR FABRIC.** Depending on your pattern, lay the fabric in a single layer or fold it crosswise or lengthwise (see page 59). You can pin the fabric layers together around the edges to keep the fabric in place and on grain.

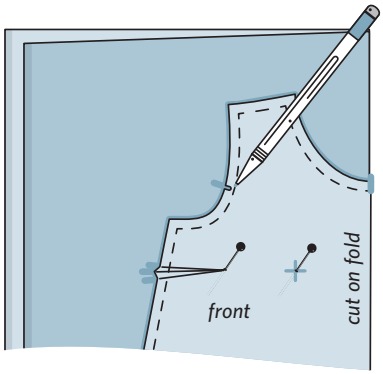
2 **LINE UP THE PATTERN PIECES WITH THE FABRIC GRAINLINE.** As described on page 57, position the patterns so both ends of the grainline arrow are equidistant from the selvages. Pin or weight the top and bottom of the arrow.

3 **PIN OR WEIGHT THE PATTERN PIECES IN PLACE.** *Beginners* should pin their patterns onto the fabric, but don't feel the need to use a million pins. The more pins you use, the more you are going to disturb the flatness of the fabric. Use only enough pins to hold the pattern pieces in place. Insert the pins through the pattern and both fabric layers parallel to the pattern edge. *Intermediate to advanced seamstresses* can use weights to hold the patterns on the fabric and use tailor's chalk to trace the pattern's outline onto the fabric. Then, remove the patterns before cutting the fabric. I use this method a lot, as it is a much truer transfer of the patterns without any ripples or puckering from the pins.

NOTE: *This technique does not work on silks or other slippery fabrics because they move when you try to draw on them with tailor's chalk.*

4 TRANSFER ALL DARTS AND NOTCHES. Use pins and tailor's chalk to mark the darts and notches from the pattern onto the fabric. It's simple and very accurate to trace around the pattern or sloper with tailor's chalk. You can also mark the notches and the outside edges of the darts with chalk, then use a notcher (see page 20) after you've cut out the pattern.

To transfer a single marking, such as the apex or dart point, insert a pin in the point, through the pattern and both layers of fabric. When you remove the pattern, hold the point of the pin and pull the pattern over the pinhead so the pin stays in the fabric. Don't worry about the small hole the pin makes in your pattern.



MARKING DARTS AND NOTCHES

5 CUT OUT THE PATTERN PIECES.
Righties: Cut around the pattern counter-clockwise. Keep your left hand on the same side of the pattern, holding down the fabric. Pause every so often to roll the cut fabric (and the pattern, if you have it pinned together) off to the right side. Then continue to cut, keeping the fabric flat while you cut.

Lefties: Cut around the pattern clockwise. Keep your right hand on the same side of the pattern, holding down the fabric. Pause every so often to roll the fabric (and the pattern, if you have it pinned together) toward the left. Then continue to cut, keeping the fabric flat while you cut.

TIP: *For long straight cutting, a rotary cutter and a cutting mat are super helpful tools. They help you cut straight and quickly. You might want to consider adding them to your toolbox.*

CHAPTER 3

THE SHIFT DRESS

I love, love, love to bake. A few years back, my sister and I set up a stall we called "Cupcakes and Couture" at a weekly market in Dubai. She sold her homemade cupcakes alongside my fashion line. This collaboration totally inspired me to create fun, comfortable, but cute dresses, with baking and entertaining in mind.

In this chapter, we'll cover three variations of the basic shift: one set-in sleeve, one raglan sleeve, and one sleeveless. I'll show you three additional ways to adapt and make this ever-versatile silhouette your own. The instructions assume that you've already made a shift sloper, based on the sloper provided or customized from your own measurements (see chapter 2).

THE SHIFT DRESS WITH SET-IN SLEEVE

The shift dress with a set-in sleeve is your most basic and timeless silhouette. Bust darts add some shape up top, but there is no shape definition at the waist or hips, making it very comfortable and versatile. The same armhole opening for a set-in sleeve can also be finished with a facing for a sleeveless variation (see Piping Hot! on page 70).

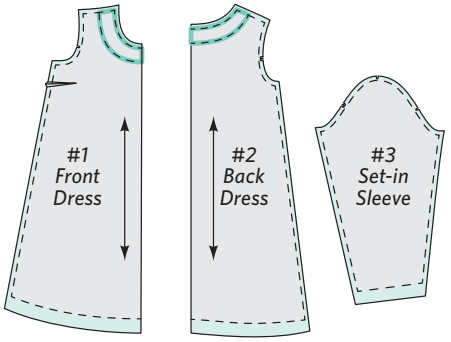
MAKE IT

Shift and Shout

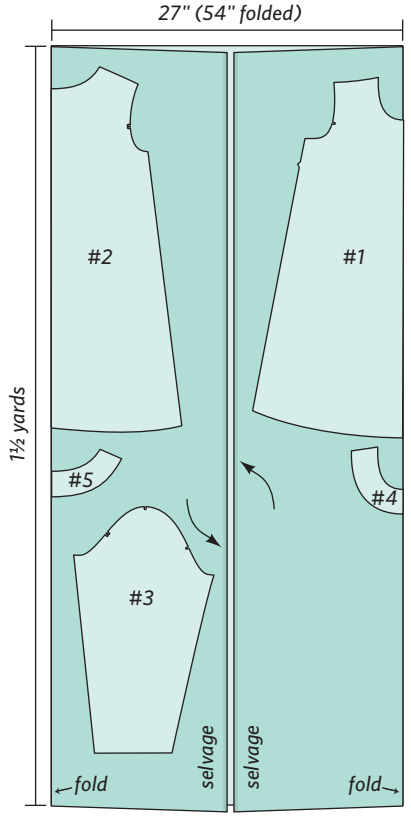
Looking cute and being comfortable is important to me. I am a busy woman and I juggle a million different projects, and I love to bake in my downtime. I am the queen of baking killer vegan chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies! Roll up your sleeves in this comfortable, loose-fitting shift dress and enjoy room for one extra cookie!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your set-in sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" medium-weight cotton fabric
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- Thread to match



SHIFT PATTERN PIECES



CUTTING LAYOUT

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS:** Locate the set-in sleeve version of the front and back slopers. Trace them and the set-in sleeve onto pattern paper. Include grainline, notches, and bust dart.

2 **DRAFT THE NECKLINE FACING:** Trace a 2"-wide front neck facing and back neck facing (see page 54) onto a separate piece of pattern paper.

3 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front, center back, and facings). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress and sleeve patterns for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

4 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on the next page for numbering the pattern pieces.

So It Seams

Curved seams can be tricky to pin and sew. So, when you are making your sleeve patterns, double-check that the armhole measurements equal the sleeve cap measurement (allowing for 1" of ease in the sleeve cap). If they match up, the sleeves will fit! It is important to get this right in the patternmaking process.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts and sleeve notches, to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: *Shift and Shout*

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#3	Set-in Sleeve	2	
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold
INTERFACING			
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric

R-E-S-P-E-C-T Your Grainline

Remember to match your pattern's grainline with the fabric's selvage (see page 57). A garment cut off-grain is not going to fit properly — it may twist or hang oddly.

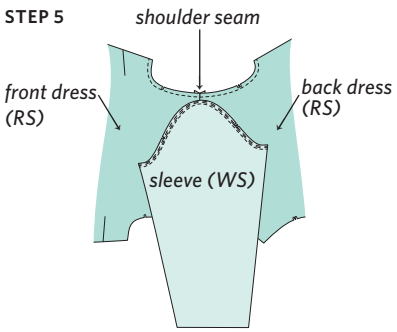
SEW IT

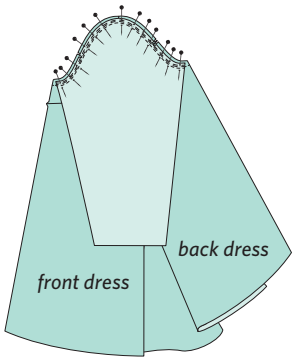
1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline, armhole openings, and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Sew the front darts (see page 183). Press.





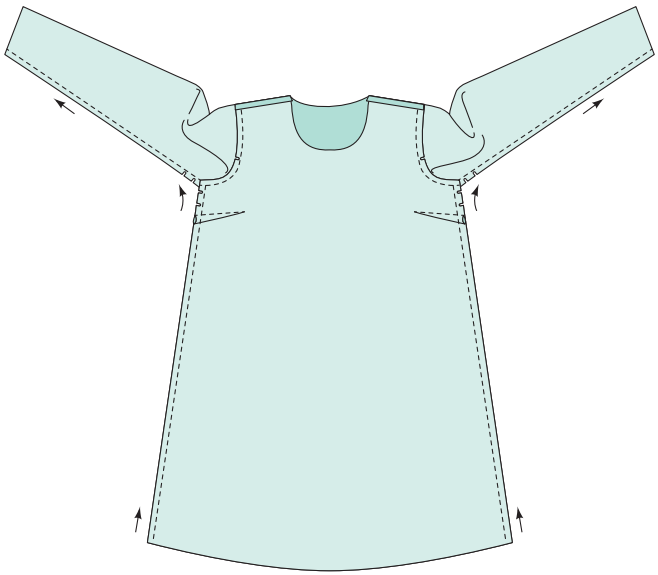
5 **SHOULDER SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress together at the shoulder seams. Press.

6 **ATTACH THE SLEEVES:** Prep the sleeves (see page 189). Pull the basting stitches to ease the sleeve cap to fit the armhole (see page 190). With the right sides together, pin each sleeve to an armhole, matching the sleeve notches. Stitch. Clip the seam allowances and press.

7 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress pieces together at the side seams. Begin at the dress hem and stitch up the side seam and across the armhole seam to the sleeve hem. Clip the curved seam allowances at the underarm and press.

8 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

9 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) on the bottom of each sleeve and at the hemline.



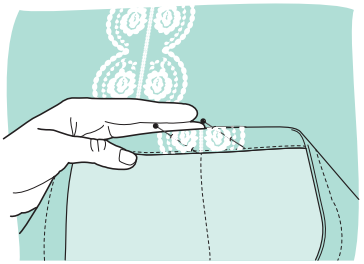
STEP 7

OWN IT

Lacy Days

Lace adds a dreamy quality to any summer dress, and it's a quick and easy way to customize. Lace always reminds me of my grandmother, who had lace coasters in abundance. There seemed to be lace trim everywhere in her house, even in the kitchen, where we'd play rummy with a huge tin of biscuits in the middle of the table. Let's take a walk down memory lane and bring some nostalgia into our shift dress. Follow my lead with this simple lace idea or come up with your own unique design.

- To begin, cut a piece of flat lace trim 1" longer than the center front measurement from neckline to hemline. Open up the front facing seam at the center front, wide enough to tuck in the top end of the lace.
- Pin the lace down the front, with ½" overlapping at the top and bottom, and then machine-stitch the lace to the dress, beginning at the hem. Depending on the width and style of the lace, it might be enough to stitch one row straight up the center. Otherwise, you can stitch two rows along the outer edges.
- Tuck the top edge between the facing and dress and re-stitch the facing seam. Fold the lace hem edge to the wrong side of the dress and stitch.



ROCK IT

Piping Hot!

Piping is an underrated trim, if you ask me! Associated with athletic clothing, it actually looks great on dresses, too. I remember when I discovered piping at fashion school — okay, I went a bit overboard with it. But used as a simple detail, this is a great way to personalize your dress. For this sleeveless version of the shift dress, I created vertical seams so I could add piping and turn this into a two-colored shift. I finished the neck and armhole with a combination facing, but if you prefer, you can make separate facings instead (see page 184).

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" solid color, medium-weight cotton fabric
- ½ yard of contrasting cotton fabric for the piping
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- Thread to match
- Approximately 4 yards of filler cord or piping (see Piping Note below)

Piping Note

To find the exact piping or filler cord yardage for your dress, measure the four seams where the piping will be placed and add them up.

DRAFT IT

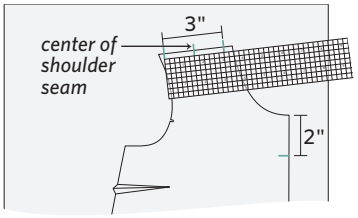
1 **DRAFT THE FRONT:** Trace your front shift sloper (the set-in sleeve version), including the grainline arrow, darts, and notches, onto pattern paper. Then make the following adjustments in a different color. Cross out old lines as you go, so you don't get confused.

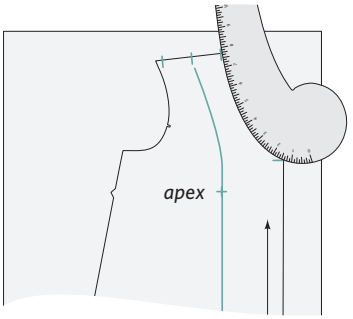
- To lower the front neckline, measure the desired amount from the neckline down along the center front and make a mark (the dress shown was lowered 2").
- Decrease the shoulder seam width to 3" by first finding the center of the shoulder and making a mark. Then measure 1½" on both sides.
- Use a vary form curve ruler to join the center marking on the new shoulder seam to the apex. From the apex, draw a straight line down to the hem, parallel to the center front. This creates the front seamline.
- Use the shaped end of the ruler to draw a new neckline connecting the markings on the shoulder seam and center front. Do the same to redraw the armhole, maintaining the shape.

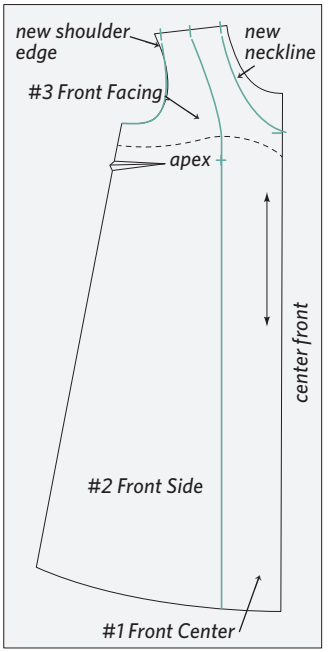
2 **DRAFT A FRONT COMBINATION FACING:** Trace a 2"-wide combination facing around the front neckline and front armhole (see page 55) onto a separate piece of pattern paper. Refer to the cutting ticket on page 73 for labeling and numbering the pattern pieces.

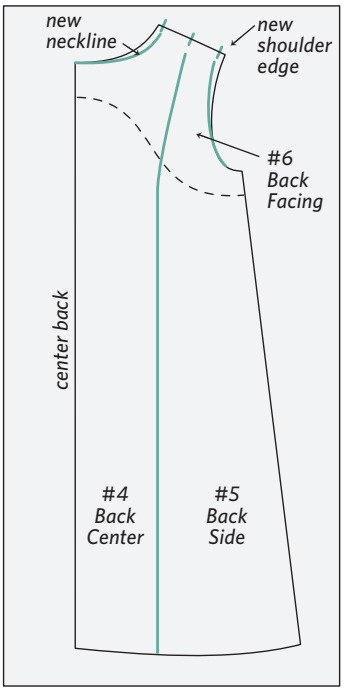
3 **TRACE THE DRAFT** onto pattern paper as three separate pieces (front center, front side, and front facing) and label them. Trace the grainline, apex, notches, and dart as well. Notch the pattern pieces at the center front, neckline, and two places along the vertical seams.

FRONT DRAFT ADJUSTMENTS









OVERVIEW OF DRAFTED BACK

4 **DRAFT THE BACK:** Trace your back shift sloper, including the grainline and notches, onto pattern paper. Then make the following adjustments, just as you did to the front sloper:

- Adjust the width of the back shoulder seam so it is exactly the same as the front (see step 1).
- Make a mark in the center of the shoulder seam, as you did for the front.
- Make a mark roughly 8" straight down from the high shoulder point (where the neckline meets the shoulder) and 4" across from the center back. Use the vary form curve ruler to join the center marking on the new shoulder seam to this marking. Then, from this marking, draw a straight line down to the hem, parallel to the center back.

5 **DRAFT A BACK COMBINATION FACING:** Trace a 2"-wide combination facing around the back neckline and back armhole (see page 55) onto a separate piece of pattern paper. Label the piece.

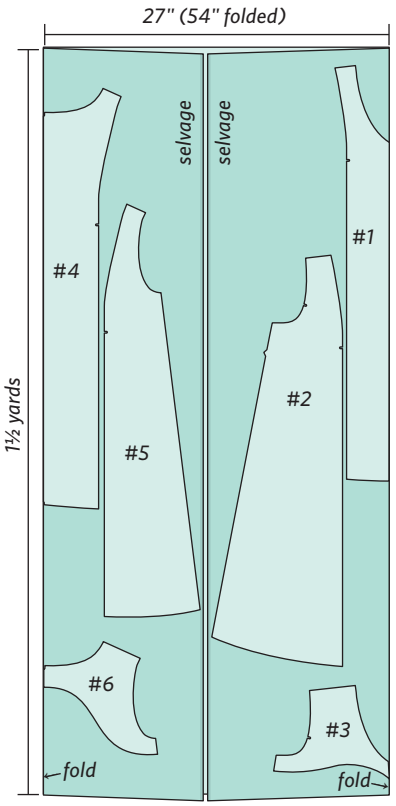
6 **TRACE THE DRAFT** onto pattern paper as three separate pieces (back center, back side, and back facing) and label them. Trace the grainline and notches as well. Notch the pattern pieces at the center back, neckline, and two places along the vertical seams.

7 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front and center back dress and facings). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

8 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out with added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on the next page for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUTTING TICKET: Piping Hot!

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Center	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side	2	
#3	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#4	Back Center	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Side	2	
#6	Back Facing	1	cut on fold
INTERFACING			
#3	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Back Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
TRIMS			
4 lengths of piping for two front seams and two back seams			



CUTTING LAYOUT

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as darts and notches, to the fabric (see page 61).

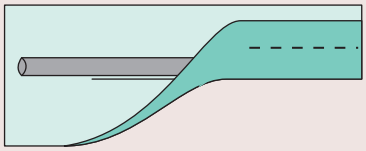
SEW IT

1 **FACINGS:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184). With the right sides together, sew the front and back facings together at the side seams.

MAKE YOUR OWN PIPING!

It is really easy to make your own piping. You can buy ready-made, which is fine if you are using a solid color. But if you want something a bit more exciting, such as a print or a really unique metallic fabric, then make your own. You'll feel pretty awesome too.

Filler cord is available in different widths; usually ¾", ½", and ¼" are the popular choices (I used ¼" for this dress). Use a zipper foot to attach the piping so you can sew as close as possible to the filler cord.



DO IT

1 **CUT THE FILLER CORD** to the desired length plus a few extra inches.

2 **CUT BIAS STRIPS** (page 181) of the fabric you wish to use for the piping. The width should be double the width of the filler cord plus 1" for two seam allowances. For example, if you are using ¼" filler cord, cut the fabric 1½" wide. Cut and piece enough strips to equal the length of your filler cord. For easy cutting, use a rotary cutter, mat, and ruler.

3 **JOIN** the bias strips together as shown on page 181 until you have the desired length.

4 **PIN THE FABRIC AROUND THE FILLER CORD:** Lay the bias tape wrong side up on a flat surface. Position the filler cord down the middle of the strip. Wrap the strip around the filler cord and pin the seam allowance.

5 **BASTE THE PIPING** using a long stitch length and a zipper foot. Stitch as close as possible to the filler cord.

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** all curved seams: neckline, armholes, and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Sew the front darts (see page 183). Press.

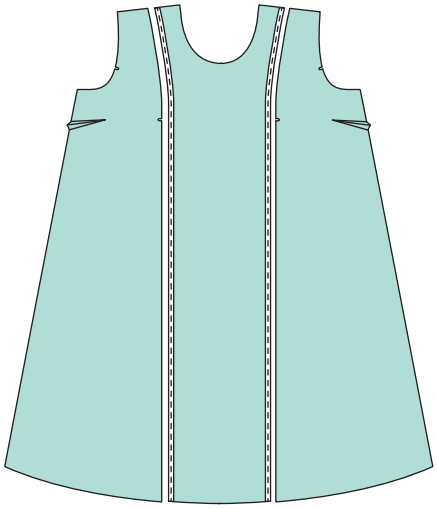
5 **FRONT DRESS:** Pin piping to the right side of the front center along both sides, aligning the raw edges. With a zipper foot, baste the piping in place, close to the stitching. Then, with the right sides together, pin the front center and the front sides together so the piping is in between, matching the notches. Turn the fabrics over and stitch along the piping basting stitches. Press. Trim the seam allowances.

6 **BACK DRESS:** Baste the piping in place and attach the back center to the back sides just as for the front.

7 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front and back dress pieces together at the side seams only. Press.

8 **COMBINATION FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

9 **HEM THE DRESS** with a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188). Press.



STEP 5

THE SHIFT DRESS WITH RAGLAN SLEEVE

A raglan sleeve is designed to join to the dress front and back with a diagonal seam from the side seam up to the neckline. The raglan sleeve sloper has a dart that provides shape to the sleeve at the shoulder. This more casual sleeve is great with all types of fabric and is perfect for designing with contrasting colors and prints. Let's play with polka dots and teapots!

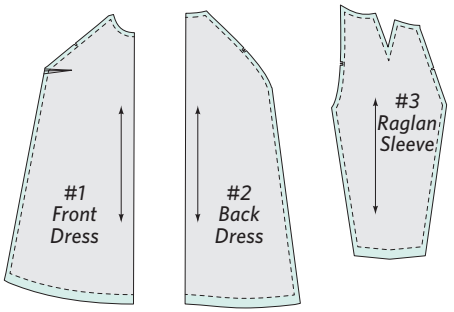
MAKE IT

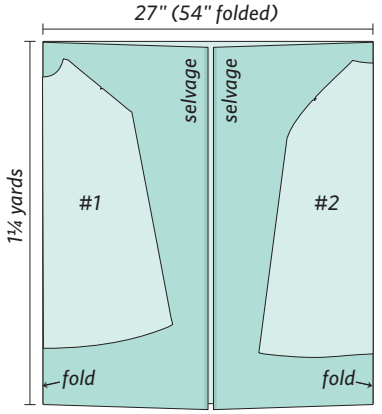
Raglan and Scones

The raglan shift, with its nice, casual vibe, is perfect for catching up over a cuppa tea and some British scones. Use a fun print for the dress with a contrasting sleeve color, an easy design detail that adds some dimension to this basic shift. Enjoy a fun brunch and a comfortable walk after your meal.

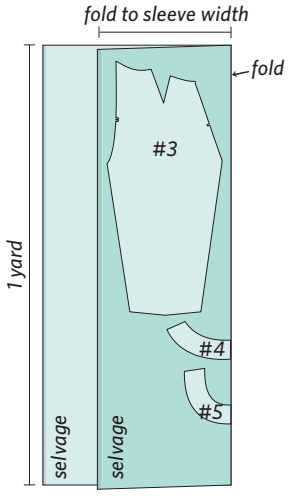
NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your raglan sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 1¼ yards of 54" medium-weight printed cotton
- Fabric 2 (sleeves and facing), 1 yard
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- Thread to match





FABRIC 1



FABRIC 2

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS:** Locate the raglan sleeve version of the front and back slopers. Trace them and the raglan sleeve onto pattern paper. Include grainline, notches, and bust darts.

2 **DRAFT THE NECKLINE FACING:** Draft a front and back facing following the instructions on page 55. These will be cut on the fabric fold.

3 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front and center back dress and facings). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress and sleeve patterns for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

4 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on page 79 for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

CUTTING TICKET: Raglan and Scones

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
FABRIC 2			
#3	Raglan Sleeve	2	
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold
INTERFACING			
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric

3 **STAYSTITCH** all curved edges of the neckline, sleeves, and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Stitch the sleeve darts in the same way you would stitch a bust dart (see page 183).

5 **PREPARE AND ATTACH THE SLEEVES** following the instructions on page 190.

6 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin the front dress and back dress together at the side seams, matching the sleeve underarm seams. Begin at the dress hem and sew up the side seam and over the underarm seam to the sleeve hem. Clip the curves at the underarm and press.

7 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184-186.

8 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (page 188) on the bottom of the sleeve and the bottom of the dress.

OWN IT

Stencil Me In

Adding a unique handmade stencil to an otherwise simple silhouette can really bring a garment to life. I am a bit of a tea lover, to say the least. Currently, I am mega-obsessed with Egyptian licorice mint tea, which will totally give you a sweet fix, plus it's good for digestion! So tea was the inspiration for my lovely teapot stencil. I like to keep the motif simple and clean, and not worry about too much detail with dress-art.

- To create your stencil, trace a design you like, or draw your own unique freehand motif, onto an acetate sheet using a fine-point permanent marker.
- With a craft knife, carefully cut out the space you'd like to ink.
- Place the stencil on the desired spot on your dress and slip cardboard under the top layer of fabric to protect the back of the dress.
- Apply fabric paint with a sponge or roller. You might want to do a test run on a piece of scrap fabric first to try out different paint effects.

If you find a great design online or want to use an image you already created, you can print out the image on your household printer and then laminate it before cutting, to avoid having to draw or trace onto acetate.

ROCK IT

Garden Goddess

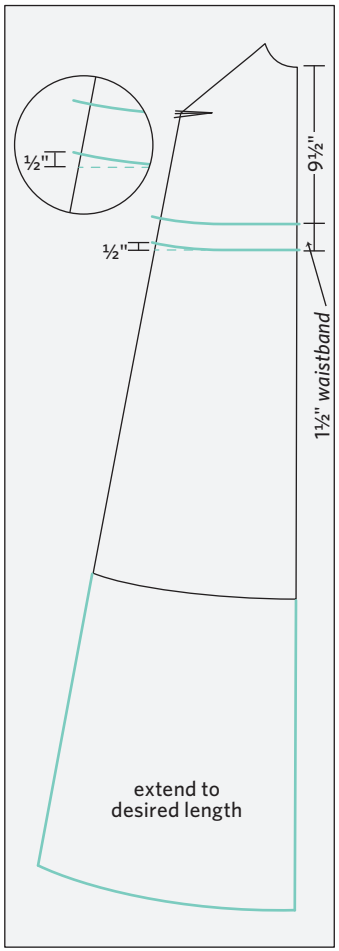
An empire waist flatters most figures. This shift gets a bit of shape from its raised waistband and back ties. And, it's super comfortable and feminine. *Garden Goddess* is perfect for hosting a garden party, Mad Hatter and all included. A glass of wine always helps too!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your raglan sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 2½ yards of 54" medium-weight cotton fabric
- Fabric 2 (sleeves, waistband, and ties), 1 yard of 54" contrasting fabric
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- Loop turner or safety pin
- Thread to match

Seeing Spots

Polka dots will never go out of style or season; however, it is important to think about the size of the dots. Small dots can be great for a more sophisticated look, while large spots are great for a summer day in the park. If your dress is long, I would go for smaller-size polka dots — a full-length skirt with large spots is going to make you look dotty-mad! Mixing and matching sizes and colors is a fun play on the timeless polka dot.



OVERVIEW OF DRAFTED FRONT
(size medium; adjust measurements to reflect your size)

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS:** Locate the raglan sleeve version of the front and back slopers. Trace them and the raglan sleeve onto pattern paper. Include grainline, notches, and bust darts.

2 **DRAFT THE FRONT:** The location of the raised, or empire, waist is relative to bust size. It can be right below the breasts or lower, depending on where you want it. To decide on your raised waistline location, measure your body. It might help to tie a ribbon around your body at the desired location. Measure down the center of your body, from your neckline (high shoulder point), over your bust to the ribbon, and also measure from your underarm down your side to the ribbon. On the dress in the photograph, the top of the waistband seam is 9½" down from the neckline at the center front and 4½" from the underarm at the side seam.

Draft the following changes to the front sloper:

- ***For the waistband,*** measure the desired amount down from the neckline on the center front and make a mark for the top of the waistband. Then make a second mark 1½" down from the first mark for the bottom of the waistband. At the side seam, measure and mark the desired amount (see above) and again 1½" down from the first mark. Use your vary form curve to draw design lines from the center front markings to the side seam markings; angle the curve up above the side seam markings by about ½" for shape. This curved rectangle will become your waistband pattern.
- ***For the longer skirt,*** use a straight ruler to extend the center front line to a full-length skirt (measure your own center front for the desired length). Extend the side seam from the underarm to the new desired length. You can keep the width at the hem the same or make it wider for a fuller hem — designer's choice!
- Trace the bodice, the waistband, and the skirt from the front draft onto separate pattern paper.

NOTE: *Go as wide as your fabric can go for the hem (approximately 13" wide for each front or back pattern piece). If you want more length/width than is possible given that restriction, you will need to double the yardage, so you can fold the fabric in half rather than quarters when cutting out the pieces.*

2 **BACK DRESS:** The back of the dress doesn't change except for the extended length and possibly the hem width, if you changed the front. Draft the back, then line up the front and back patterns at the side seam to make sure they are the same length. Notch the top and bottom waistband placement on the back pattern.

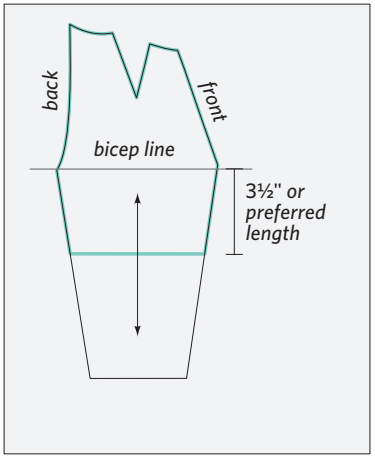
3 **DRAFT THE SLEEVE:** Make any desired adjustment to the length of the sleeve. The dress in the photograph shows a shorter sleeve, but this is your choice. For reference, you might want to measure the length of a sleeve on one of your favorite shirts or dresses. I cut off the bottom of the sleeve 3½" below the bicep line.

4 **DRAFT THE NECKLINE FACING:** Draft a front and back neck facing following the instructions for raglan sleeve facings on page 55.

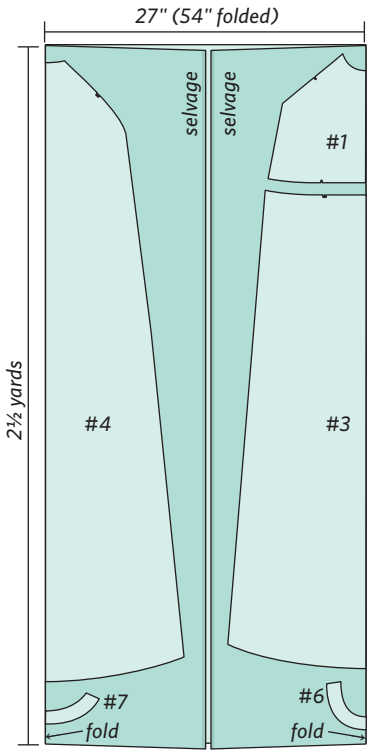
5 **DRAFT THE WAISTBAND TIES:** Draw a 1½" × 24" rectangle. This is a good length for tying a nice bow at the back. At one end, draw a 45-degree angle to shape the tie ends.

6 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front bodice, center front waistband, center front skirt, center back dress, and facings). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress and sleeve patterns for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

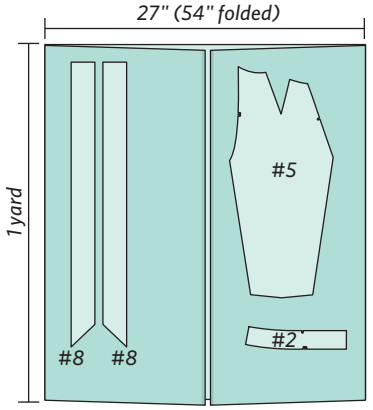
7 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all joining seams (bodice and waistband, waistband and skirt) to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Transfer existing notches and notch all pieces (page 57) at the center front. Refer to the cutting ticket on the next page for numbering the pattern pieces.



DRAFTED RAGLAN SLEEVE



FABRIC 1



FABRIC 2

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: Garden Goddess

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#1	Front Bodice	1	cut on fold
#3	Front Skirt	1	cut on fold
#4	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#6	Front Neck Facing	1	cut on fold
#7	Back Neck Facing	1	cut on fold
FABRIC 2			
#2	Front Waistband	1	cut on fold
#5	Sleeve	2	
#8	Waistband Ties	4	
INTERFACING			
#2	Front Waistband	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Front Neck Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#7	Back Neck Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding front waistband and facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **FRONT DRESS:** Sew the front darts (see page 183). and press. With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front bodice and front waistband, matching the center front notches. Press. Then, pin and stitch the right sides of the waistband and front skirt together, matching the center front notches. Press.

5 **MAKE THE TIES:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch two waistband ties together leaving the short straight edge open (the end that will join the side seam). Repeat with the remaining two ties. Clip the corners, trim the seam allowances, turn the ties right side out, and press.

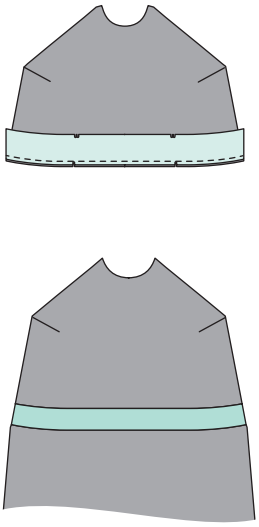
6 **ATTACH THE TIES:** With the raw edges together, pin the ties to the side seams of the front dress so they align with the front waistband. Make sure the diagonal ends are angled the same way (with both longer ends on the top or both on the bottom; your choice). Stitch and press.

7 **PREPARE AND ATTACH THE SLEEVES** following the instructions on page 190.

8 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin the front dress and back dress pieces together at the side seams, matching the sleeve underarm seams and with the waistband ties sandwiched between them. Begin at the dress hem and sew up each side seam, across the underarm to the sleeve hem in one continuous seam. Clip the curves at the underarm and press.

9 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

10 **HEM THE DRESS:** Machine-stitch a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) on the bottom of the sleeves and the bottom of the dress.



STEP 4

THE SLEEVELESS SHIFT DRESS

Show some shoulders, girls! The great thing about this shift pattern is that you are not going bare-shoulders in a body-hugging dress, which might make you feel uncomfortable. Most of us girls have bits we want to hide, but honestly, showing a little bit of skin can be a good thing. The sleeveless shift, like all the shift dresses, is super comfortable. It's loose-fitting enough to allow you to wear a T-shirt underneath, if you wish. The following dresses are all drafted using the strapless version of the slopers.

MAKE IT

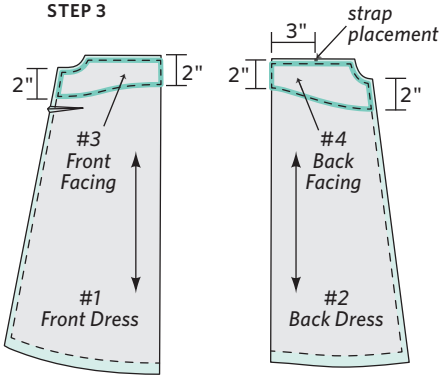
Baking Babe

The bake-off! I love it! Ladies, get your rolling pins ready, 'cause I ain't fooling around. Ever since I learned how to "cook" at school — bring on the chocolate caramel biscuit — I knew this was going to be a lifelong passion of mine. From cheesecakes to my version of the classic Black Forest gâteau, I do love to bake. Whether you are beating eggs or enjoying store-bought, how about you whisk up this *Baking Babe* frock in no time at all!

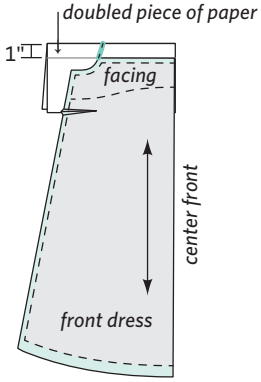
NEED IT

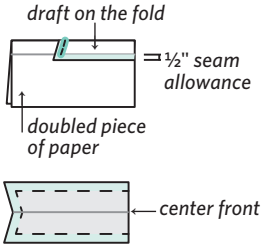
- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" fabric
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- 1 yard of ribbon, ½" to ¾"wide
- Thread to match

STEP 3



STEP 4





DRAFTED CASING

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS** for the front dress and back dress onto pattern paper; be sure to trace the sleeveless seamline. If you want a longer dress, add length to the drafts, and if you would like to go shorter, simply shorten the drafts.

2 **MARK RIBBON (STRAPS) PLACEMENT** on the back dress. Measure and mark along the top edge, 3" from the center back toward the side seam for the ribbon or cording placement.

3 **DRAFT THE FACING:** Trace across the neckline and around the underarm, for the front and the back, onto a separate piece of pattern paper (see page 55). Draft a 2"-wide combination facing for the front and back neck and armholes. Make sure you transfer the strap placement.

4 **DRAFT THE FRONT CASING:**

- Fold a piece of pattern paper in half horizontally. Draw a horizontal line 1" below the fold that is the same length as the front neckline pattern.
- To shape the sides of the casing, temporarily tape the front neckline of the dress front pattern below the drawn line. Draw a new design line at the casing side, using the shape of the underarm curve for guidance, so the side appears slightly diagonal.
- Untape and remove the dress front pattern. The center front of the facing will be cut on the fabric fold. Unfold the finished pattern piece. Make sure to mark the foldline and add a vertical grainline arrow at the center front.

5 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to the edges of the front dress, back dress, front casing, and facing patterns, except for the center front and center back, which are cut on the fabric fold. Add 1" to the bottom edge for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

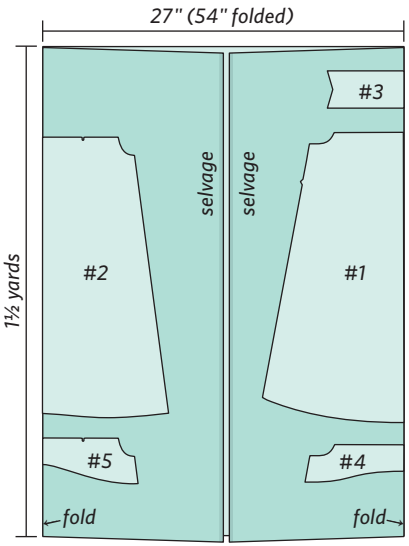
6 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces. Remember to notch all pattern markings.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the lay-out diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: Baking Babe

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#3	Front Casing	2	cut on fold
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold
INTERFACING			
#3	Front Casing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#4	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#5	Back Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric



CUTTING LAYOUT

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding casing and facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

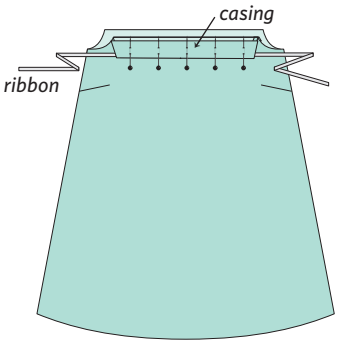
3 **DARTS:** Sew the front darts (see page 183). Press.

4 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress together at the side seams. Press.

5 **PREPARE THE CASING:** With the casing pieces open and the right sides together, stitch the sides together, pivoting at the V; leave the top and bottom edges open. Clip into the V. Turn the casing right side out and press. Baste the top edges together and the bottom edges together and fold the casing in half. Press the fold, which becomes the tunnel for the ribbon.

6 **ATTACH FRONT CASING TO FRONT NECKLINE:** With the raw edges together, baste the casing to the right side of the front neckline. Slide the ribbon through the casing near the fold.

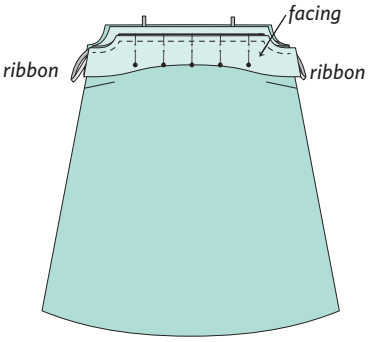
7 **DETERMINE RIBBON LENGTH:** You might have to estimate the correct length and adjust it once the dress is finished. But it would help to slip the dress on and run the ribbon or cording over your shoulders and pin the ends at the back markings. Adjust the length and shorten if needed.



STEP 6

8 ATTACH THE FACINGS

- Pin the ribbon ends at the placement markings on the back dress.
- Prepare the facing (see page 184). With the right sides together, pin and stitch the facing to the dress neckline in one continuous seam. The front casing will be sandwiched between the dress and facing with all the raw edges aligned. The ribbon ends will be sandwiched in the back.
- Trim corners and excess seam allowance. Clip underarm curves. Turn the facing to the inside, extending the casing and ribbon. Press.
- Understitch as much of the facing as possible, particularly the curved underarm area (see page 180). Hand-tack the facing to the dress at the side seams (see page 179).



STEP 8

9 HEM THE DRESS: Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) at the hemline. Press.

Facing the Facts

When attaching a facing piece to a garment it is always important to align the pieces correctly, by matching the notches. Start by pinning your dress and facing pieces together at the center front and center back notches, then pin at the side seam notches. Then pin evenly between those markers to secure the correct shape of the facing.

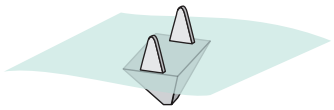
OWN IT

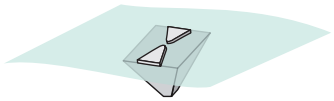
Stud Muffin

Who doesn't love studs? Or muffins, in fact? Select your stud of choice to embellish a simple sleeveless shift with a cute design, around the neckline as I have done here, or around the hem. Pick a simple motif to keep the design nice and clean.

Studs come in a variety of sizes and shapes and are available inexpensively at craft stores or online. I like the studs with the spikes.

- First mark the spots where you want a stud.
- Then press the spikes of the stud through the right side of the fabric with your finger or thumb.
- On the back side of the fabric, close the prongs using a thimble or small craft hammer. Any flat edge will do. If you use a knife, make sure it is blunt.





ROCK IT

Jump Around

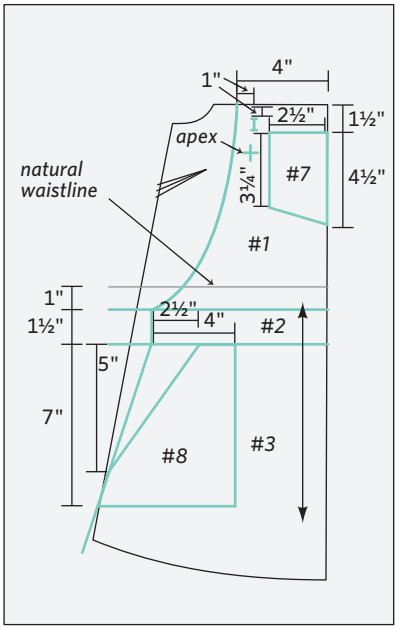
I love a little jumper dress. I think they are so cute, and they manage to make me feel small and girly, even at 5'9". Channel your inner child in this cozy jumper, great for doing the school run or playing like a kid in the park. Working with children as an arts and crafts teacher has taught me so much about letting go and having fun. Nothing put a bigger smile on my face than when my students brought me homemade cookies at the end of the semester. Jumpers look fabulous made in traditional denim, but a printed cotton fabric looks great, too.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your shift sloper (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 1½ yards of 54" medium-weight printed cotton fabric
- Fabric 2 (lining), 1½ yards of 54" lightweight cotton
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- Thread to match both main fabric and lining
- 2 buttons, ½" or ¾" diameter

Sketch It

You don't need to be a fashion designer to sketch. Take a look in some fashion magazines or online for some inspiration, and give it a try. A pencil, colored pencils, or markers are a great way to get ideas flowing and to try out what colors work together for your look.



FRONT DRAFT

DRAFT IT

1 **DRAFT THE FRONT:** Trace the front shift sloper onto pattern paper around the strapless seamline. Include the grainline, darts, and notches and make adjustments as follows:

- Measure and mark 4" across the top edge from the center front toward the side seam.
- Draw a new waistline 1" below the natural waistline (you might want to draw the natural waistline on the draft for reference first). Measure in 1" from the original side seam at the new waistline to decrease the width of the skirt at this low hip point.
- Use a curved ruler to connect the neckline marking to the dropped waistline at the side seam.
- Mark the button placement on the front bodice, 1" from the side and 1" down from the top.
- Draft a waistband by drawing a second line from the center front to the side seam 1½" below the new waistline.
- Adjust the length of the jumper as desired. Mark the desired length on the center front and side seam and draw a new hemline. The jumper shown is 11" at the center front for a mid-thigh length.

2 **DRAFT THE POCKETS** directly on the dress front draft. Draft the pockets as follows:

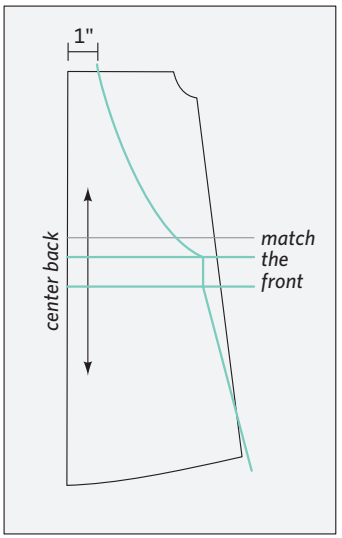
- *For the front patch pocket:* Draw the top edge of the pocket 1½" down from the top edge of the dress and 2½" from the center front toward the side. Draw the side of the pocket 2½" from the center and 3¼" long. Make a mark on the center front 4½" down from the top of the pocket and draw a line to connect it with the bottom of the pocket side to draft a point at the bottom of the pocket.
- *For the side pockets:* Measure across the bottom of the waistband and make a mark 2½" and 4" from the side seam. Then measure and mark 5" and 7" down from the bottom of the waistband along the side seam. Draw a line perpendicular to the side seam at the 7" marking to connect to a vertical line straight down from the 4" marking at the waistband. Draw in the slanted edge of the pocket to connect the remaining two markings.

3 **DRAFT THE BACK:** Trace the back shift sloper onto pattern paper around the sleeveless seamline. Include the grainline, darts, and notches, then make the following adjustments:

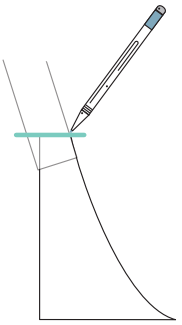
- Align the back draft with the front draft at the side seams and mark the placement for the top and bottom of the waistband.
- As for the front, come in 1" from the original side seam at the new waistline to create a more narrow fit around this dropped waist.
- To shape the back, measure and mark 1" from the center back across the top edge. Use a curved ruler to connect this mark to the dropped waistband at the side seam.

4 **DRAFT THE STRAPS:** Draft a front and back strap that will be joined at the shoulder as follows.

- *For the front:* Draft a rectangle that is 1½" × 7". Draw a vertical buttonhole 1½" from one end and in the center of the strap. This means there will be ¾" on either side of the vertical buttonhole.
- *For the back:* Draft a rectangle that is 1½" × 11½". You need to angle the way the straps are sewn to the back for a comfortable fit. To angle the strap, line up one end with the top edge of the back dress draft, so the strap extends diagonally from the center back to cross over the shoulder. Mark the angle of the strap end with tailor's chalk. Trim away the bottom of the strap at the marking so you still have ½" seam allowance at the bottom of the strap where it joins at the back neckline.



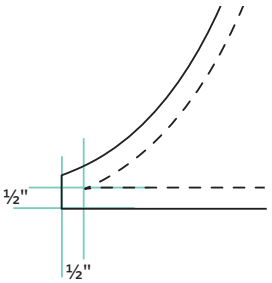
BACK DRAFT



BACK STRAPS

No Pointed Seams

When corners of your pattern pieces end with a point, as they do on your jumper, you need to square off the ends of the pattern. You want pointed seams that are ½" evenly squared, or you end up with inaccurate sewing. Use your gridded ruler to redraw the corners.



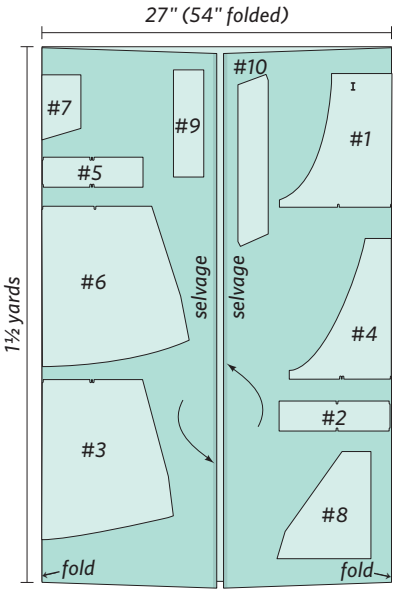
CUTTING TICKET: Jump Around

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#1	Front Bodice	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Waistband	1	cut on fold
#3	Front Skirt	1	cut on fold
#4	Back Bodice	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Waistband	1	cut on fold
#6	Back Skirt	1	cut on fold
#7	Front Pocket	1	cut on fold
#8	Side Pocket	2	
#9	Front Strap	2	
#10	Back Strap	2	
FABRIC 2			
#1	Front Bodice	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Waistband	1	cut on fold
#4	Back Bodice	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Waistband	1	cut on fold
#8	Side Pocket	2	
#9	Front Strap	2	
#10	Back Strap	2	
INTERFACING			
#2	Front Waistband	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Waistband	1	cut on fold
#9	Front Strap	2	cut ⅛" smaller than fabric
#10	Back Strap	2	cut ⅛" smaller than fabric

5 **TRACE ALL PATTERNS** from your draft onto separate pattern paper: all front pieces, back pieces, and straps.

6 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to the edges of front/back bodice, front/back waistband, front/back skirt, pockets, and strap patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front and center back). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the skirts for the hem allowance. Add notches at the center front and center back, waistband placement, and pocket placement at the side seams.

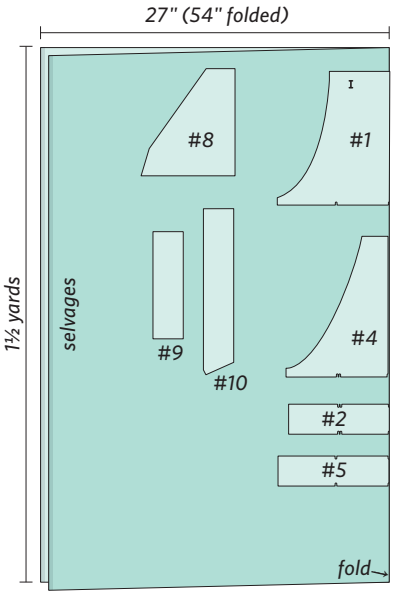
7 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on page 96 for numbering the pattern pieces.



FABRIC 1

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Use tailor's chalk to mark your notches and buttonholes on the fabric.



FABRIC 2

SEW IT

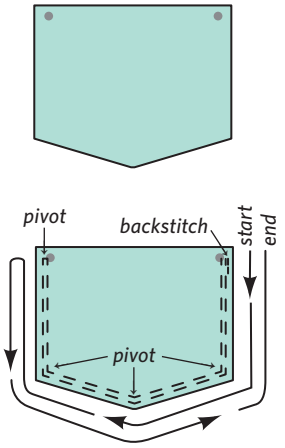
1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

Cornered Edges

Try this technique for securing pockets.

1 Mark the corners with tailor's chalk the desired width from the edges, typically ¼" to ½".

2 Start sewing at one of the marks and stitch around the pocket perimeter to the other mark. Stop sewing with the needle down to pivot the pocket at each corner. Backstitch at the beginning and end of the seam. Do not stitch across the pocket opening.



2 PREPARE THE STRAPS as follows:

- With the right sides together, pin and stitch a front strap and a back strap together at the shoulder seams (not the buttonhole end or the angled end). Repeat for the second strap.
- Repeat the process for the strap lining pieces.
- With the right sides together, pin the straps and lining pieces together. Stitch around the entire outside edge except for the angled end, which is where the strap joins the back neckline.
- Trim the corners and seam allowances at the shoulder seams and the front strap corners to avoid bulk in the straps. Press.
- Turn the straps right side out through the open, angled end, using your loop turner or a safety pin, and press.

3 FRONT POCKET: Press all the seam allowances ½" to the wrong side. Topstitch with contrast color thread ⅜" from the outer edge on all sides, including the top edge. Center and pin the pocket on the front bodice, aligning the center fronts. Topstitch the pocket in place ¼" from the side and bottom edges. Refer to Cornered Edges at left.

4 SIDE POCKETS: Pin the pocket and lining pieces with the right sides together. Stitch around all the edges, leaving a small opening on one side for turning. Trim the corners and seam allowance to ¼". Press. Turn right side out, and press. Slipstitch the opening closed. Set the pockets aside.

5 FRONT AND BACK JUMPER: With the right sides together, pin the front bodice to the front waistband and the front waistband to the front skirt. Stitch and press the seams. Repeat to join the lining front bodice and lining front waistband pieces. Press the bottom edge of the lining front waistband ½" to the wrong side. Repeat with all the back jumper and back lining pieces.

6 SIDE SEAMS: With the right sides together, pin the front jumper to the back jumper at the side seams. Stitch and press. Repeat with the lining pieces.

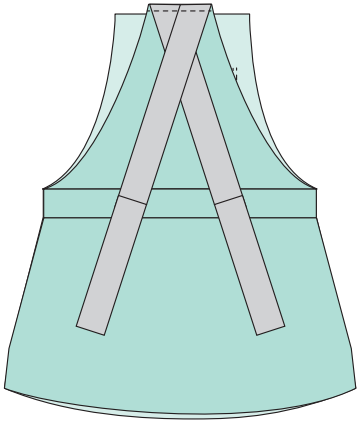
7 **PIN THE SIDE POCKETS** to the front skirt just below the waistband and along the side seam. Topstitch them in place, ¼" from the outer edge across the top, down the side, across the bottom and up the side, pivoting at the corners. Backstitch at the beginning and end of the seam. Do not stitch the diagonal side; this is your pocket opening. Press.

8 **ATTACH THE STRAPS:** With the right sides together, pin the straps and back bodice together, with the angled edges lined up as shown and the straps crossed and overlapping. Stitch.

9 **ATTACH THE LINING:** Pin the jumper and lining with the right sides together around the front and back bodice, with the straps tucked between them. Stitch. Trim the corners and seam allowance when there are more then two layers to avoid bulk at the seams. Turn the lining to the wrong side, extending the straps. Press. Slipstitch the bottom edge of the lining to the waistband seam.

10 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) at the hemline. Press.

11 **SEW THE BUTTONS** on the jumper at the placement markings and make vertical buttonholes at the placement markings on the straps (see page 182).



CHAPTER 4

THE SHEATH DRESS

I actually find long vacations to be quite frustrating. I know that sounds mad, but I always feel guilty for being gone too long. The mini-break is a different story! I am quite fond of these quick trips. It almost feels like a cheeky little secret, more exciting and relaxing at the same time. And three days is plenty of time to wear a suitcase full of fab dresses! It's all about beach, barbecues, and boating.

All of the dresses in this chapter are created using the sheath sloper, with set-in sleeve, raglan sleeve, and strapless adaptations. The instructions assume that you've already made a sheath sloper, based on the sloper provided or customized from your own measurements (see chapter 2).

THE SHEATH DRESS WITH SET-IN SLEEVE VARIATIONS

The sheath is a fabulous, basic silhouette with endless possibilities. Shaped to fit the body with waist darts, this style gives us girls a lovely feminine shape. If you're a bit like me (less hourglass, and more . . . glass), you can shape the dress with a pinch here, or more volume there, to accentuate your assets. Let me inspire you with my seaside collection!

MAKE IT

Mini-Break Basic

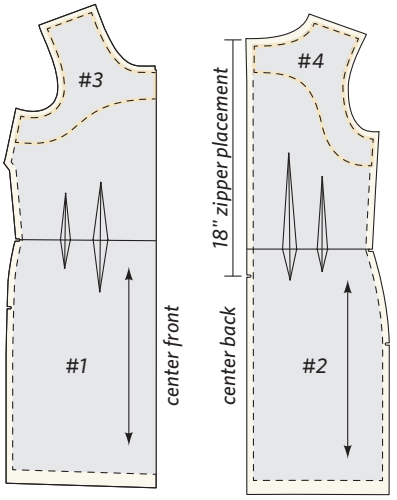
Deck chairs, seagulls, and umbrellas dot the beach, coconut tanning oil scents the breeze. A few days of this is awesome! This basic sheath dress is perfect for strolling around town before heading to the beach for some serious tanning.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" medium-weight cotton
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- 18" zipper
- Thread to match

Bright Ideas

- Here's a fun idea. How about using bias tape around your neckline instead of making a facing (see page 180)? This shortcut saves time and your dress looks rather fancy, too! Packaged bias tape comes in loads of fun colors, so choose a color that pops! If you decide to use bias tape, you won't need to cut the facings and corresponding interfacing pieces.
- If you plan to add the sailor collar (page 106), which is traditionally white, I suggest using a solid color for the dress. But, when did I ever say to go traditional? I'd like to see a sailor collar in green with pink ribbon! Why not try it and send me the pix!



DRAFT IT

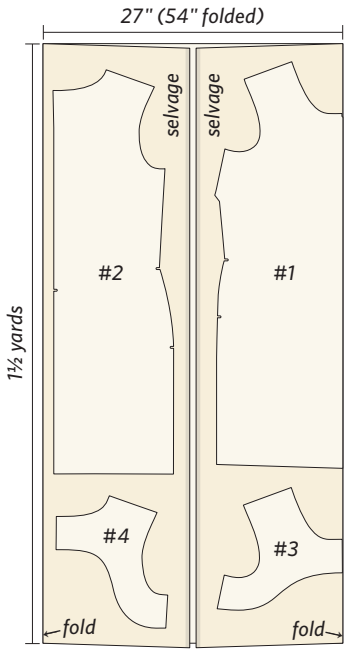
1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS** for the front and back sheath onto pattern paper. On the center back, plan for the zipper by measuring 18" down from the neckline and make a notch to mark the zipper bottom.

2 **DRAFT A COMBINATION FACING** with a center back opening. Trace 2"-wide combination armhole/neck facings for the front and back onto a separate piece of pattern paper (see page 55). The back facing has a center back opening.

3 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to all edges of the dress front, dress back, and facing patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front). Because there is a center back zipper, that seam requires seam allowance. Add 1" to the bottom edge for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

NOTE: *If you are adding a sailor collar (see page 106), you will draft separate neckline and armhole facings instead, so skip this step.*

4 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on the next page for numbering the pattern pieces.



CUTTING LAYOUT

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

CUTTING TICKET: *Mini-Break Basic*

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	2	
#3	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#4	Back Facing	2	
INTERFACING			
#3	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#4	Back Facing	2	cut ¼" smaller than fabric

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline, armhole openings, and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Stitch the front and back darts (see page 183). Press.

5 **SIDE SEAMS:** Pin and stitch the front dress and back dress with the right sides together at the side seams. Clip curved seam allowances and press.

6 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the center back, following instructions for a regular or invisible zipper (see page 193).

7 **COMBINATION FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

8 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem on the bottom of the dress (see page 188). Press.

Designer Tip

If you want to Own It and add the super-cute sailor collar, jump to page 106 after step 6, skip step 7, and return to step 8.

OWN IT

Tinker, Tailor, Sew a Sailor

Nautical is a timeless trend in my book. Make it retro or sport it super-modern — either way you are bound to catch someone's "aye"!

You'll need ½ yard of 54" medium-weight cotton in a complementary color to your dress. Traditionally a sailor collar is white (as shown here), but play freely with color — there are no rules on this ship!

Draft the collar pattern pieces:

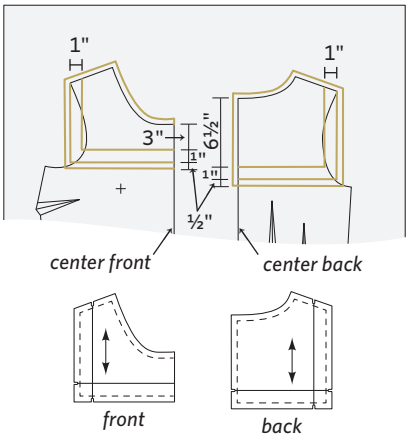
- Onto pattern paper, trace the *Mini-Break Basic* pattern #1 (see page 104) around the neckline, shoulder seam, and 3" down the center front. Draw a horizontal line from the center front at the 3" marking across the front of the dress, beyond the armhole.
- Draw a straight, vertical line from the edge of the shoulder seam (for a 2½"-wide collar and shoulder seam) to the bottom of the collar (horizontal line).
- Trace pattern #2 around the neckline, shoulder seam, and 6½" down the center back. Draw a horizontal line from the center back at the 6½" marking across the back of the dress, beyond the armhole.
- Draw a straight, vertical line from the edge of the shoulder seam (as for the front collar) from the shoulder seam to the bottom of the collar (horizontal line).
- Add ½" seam allowance around the patterns, except for at the center front, which is cut on the fabric fold. On the front and back collar patterns, draw ribbon placement lines 1" from all seamlines except the center back and neckline edges. Notch the ribbon placement at the shoulder seams and outside edge of the collar.

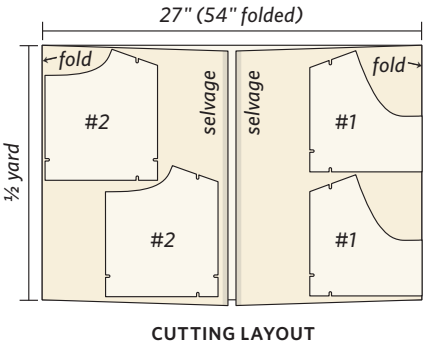
Draft the facing pieces:

- Trace a 2"-wide neck facing around the front and back neckline onto a separate piece of pattern paper (see page 54).
- Trace 2"-wide armhole facings around the front and back armholes (see page 55) onto separate pieces of pattern paper.

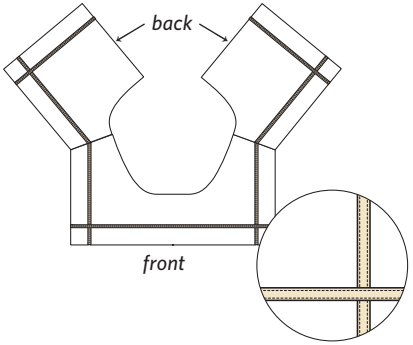
Now cut out your pieces as shown, with six collar pieces total, and then cut one set from fusible interfacing. Press the interfacing to the wrong side of the collar lining pieces. Next, stitch the front and back collar pieces together at the shoulder seams and do the seam with the lining pieces. Pin the ribbon to the collar in desired placement, and then stitch in place along the edges.

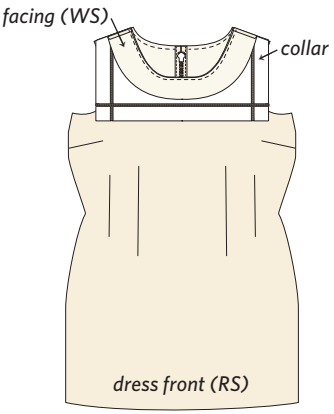
With right sides together, pin and stitch the outer edges of the collar and lining pieces. Trim the corners, turn the collar right side out, and press. Finish the *Mini-Break Dress* as instructed, using separate facings for the neck and armholes. Sandwich the collar in between the dress neckline and facing.





CUTTING LAYOUT





ROCK IT

The Captain's Shirt Dress

Adding a yoke to a shirt or dress expands your options for mixing and matching fabrics. A yoke is basically an additional seam across the upper chest on the front, on the back, or on both, as I've done with this dress. If you prefer, feel free to draft only a front or back yoke. For the buttoned front, you need to draft an extended facing; if you've never made one, now is a good time to learn a new skill!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your set-in sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 1½ yards of solid color 54" medium-weight cotton
- Fabric 2 (yoke, collar lining, cuff lining), ½ yard of 54" striped medium-weight cotton
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- Thread to match
- 9 buttons, ½" diameter

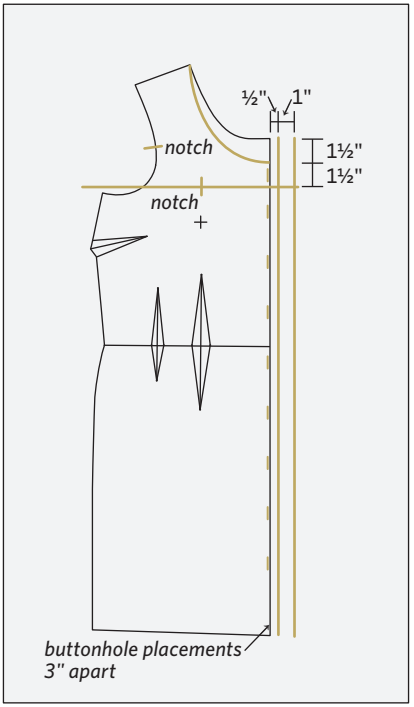
DRAFT IT

1 **FRONT DRESS:** Trace the sloper for the front sheath onto pattern paper, including the grainline arrow, notches, and darts. Be sure to trace the set-in sleeve seamline. Then draft the following changes:

- Draw a dropped neckline by measuring and marking 1½" down from the top edge on the center front. Use a French curve to draw a new neckline, connecting the marking to the high shoulder point at the neck (see page 71).

- Draft the center front opening and fold-back facing. Draw a vertical line parallel to and ½" from the existing center front. It should run from the top edge to the hem and will be the foldline for the edge of the facing. Draw a second line, parallel to and 1" from the one you just drew, to make a fold-back facing and button placket. Extend the new style line at the neck and hem so they meet the vertical lines.
- Draw the yoke style line. Measure 1½" below the new neckline at the center front, and draw a horizontal line from the center front at the marking across to the armhole.
- Mark vertical buttonhole placements on the original center front line. Make the first placement marking ¾" down from the neckline. Mark the rest of the buttons approximately 3" apart down the length of the center front.

2 **TRACE** the front extension on the dress to use as a pattern for interfacing (about 2" wide by the length of the center front). Mark matching notches on the yoke design line. Separately trace the front yoke and the front dress (below the yoke) onto pattern paper, include the grainline arrow, darts, and notches. Set them aside. (See the finished pattern pieces in step 7.)



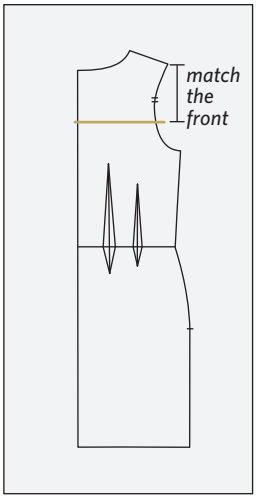
FRONT DRESS

Keeping Horizontal Lines Straight

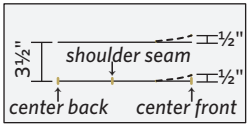
There are a few ways to draw straight lines:

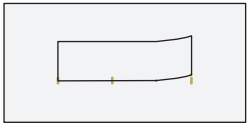
- Use your gridded ruler to line up one of the marked grids with the center front (or back).
- Use an L-ruler, a handy tool for squaring up pattern lines. Line it up right against the center front (or back) to draw the line.
- Work on gridded pattern paper and let the printed grid keep you straight.

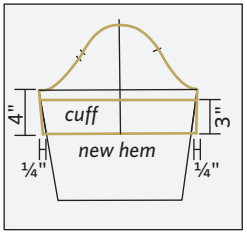
I like to use the plain side of the pattern paper, because I find the grid distracting, but I use my gridded ruler.



BACK DRESS







3 **BACK DRESS:** Trace the sloper for the back sheath onto pattern paper, including the grainline arrow, notches, and darts. Be sure to trace the set-in sleeve seamline. The only adjustment the back needs is the addition of the yoke line. Match up the front to the back along the shoulder seam and mark on the back where the yoke ends at the armhole opening. Draw a horizontal line from that mark to the center back. Trace the yoke and lower dress from your draft onto separate pattern paper, including grainline, darts, and notches.

4 **COLLAR:** With the collar, you do not need to make a draft and then trace it; go ahead and make the pattern from these measurements. Measure along the front and back necklines of the patterns to determine the collar length measurement. Measure from the center back at the neckline to the shoulder seam, and then from the shoulder seam to the end of the front extension (½" beyond the original center front line). Add the measurements together and draw a rectangle that is 3½" long and high. The left end of the rectangle is the center back and the right end is the center front. Add a mark for the location of the shoulder seam.

- At the right side (front of the collar), mark a line ½" up from the bottom corner and also ½" above the top corner. Blend the markings to form a smooth curve and nicely shaped collar.
- Add a grainline arrow, and mark a notch at the shoulder seam.

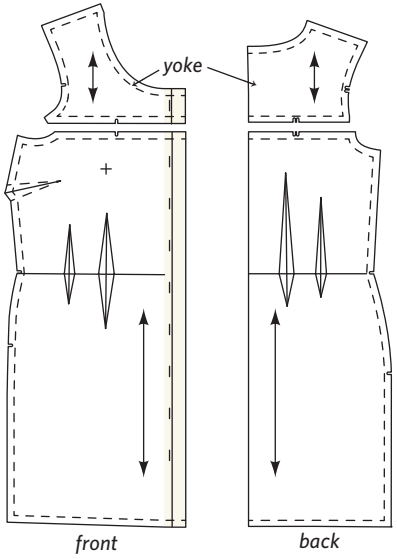
5 **SLEEVE AND SLEEVE CUFF:** Trace your set-in sleeve sloper onto pattern paper, including the grainline and notches for front and shoulder seams.

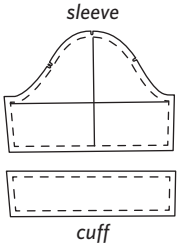
- Draw a new shorter hemline 4" down from the bicep line.
- Widen the bottom of the sleeve underarm seamline by ¼" on each side of the underarm seam, so you will be able to roll up the sleeve.
- Draw a horizontal line 3" up from the sleeve hem. Trace the new rectangle shape created between this line and the hemline to make the sleeve cuff pattern. Label it and set the sleeve and cuff drafts aside.
- Trace the sleeve onto pattern paper, including the grainline and notches.

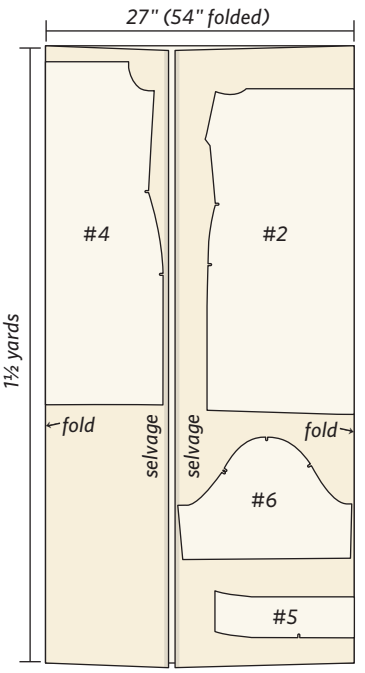
6 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except the center back, back yoke, and back collar.

Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress (front and back) and cuff lining for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked, as well as the center front, the center front foldline, the center back, and the button/buttonhole placement.

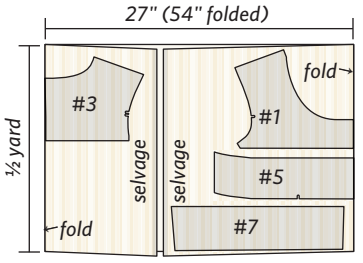
7 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on page 112 for numbering the pattern pieces.







FABRIC 1



FABRIC 2

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Note that both fabrics are folded off center, to fit the sleeve in the main fabric, and to fit the cuff lining in the contrast fabric. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, notches, and button/buttonhole placements, to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: The Captain's Shirt Dress

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#2	Front Dress	2	cut on fold
#4	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#5	Collar	1	cut on fold
#6	Sleeve	2	
FABRIC 2			
#1	Front Yoke	2	cut on fold
#3	Back Yoke	1	cut on fold
#5	Collar	1	cut on fold for undercollar
#7	Cuff Lining	2	
INTERFACING			
1½"-wide pieces for center front extensions for yoke and dress front × the length of the center front.			
#5	Collar	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#7	Cuff Lining	2	¼" smaller than fabric

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the yokes and front dress pieces along the front placket extension, the contrast fabric collar, and the cuff lining pieces.

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline, armholes, yoke, and collar pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Sew the darts in the front dress and back dress (see page 183).

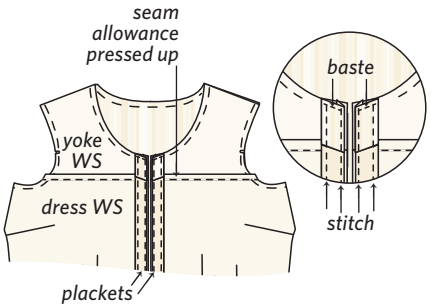
5 **YOKES:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front yokes to the front dress pieces and the back yoke to the back dress. Press seams up toward the yoke.

6 **SHOULDER SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front pieces to the back at the shoulder seams. Press all the seams.

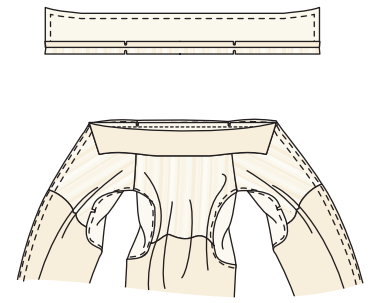
7 **FRONT BUTTON PLACKETS:** Press under the straight edge of the front openings ½" to the wrong side and edgestitch. Press under again on the foldline you drafted and pin each placket from neckline to hemline. Baste across the plackets at the neckline. Topstitch close to both folded edges of each placket.

8 **COLLAR:** Make and attach the collar as follows.

- Press the neck edge of the outside collar (main fabric) ½" to the wrong side. With the right sides together, pin and stitch the outer edge of the collar pieces together (do not stitch the neck edge). Trim the corners and press. Turn the collar right side out and press.
- Pin the lining side of the collar to the right side of the dress at the neckline. Stitch, keeping the pressed edge of the collar out of the seam. Trim the seam allowance and press.
- On the inside of the garment, slipstitch the pressed edge of the outer collar over the seam.



STEP 7



STEP 8

9 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress together at the side seams. Press.

10 **PREPARE THE SLEEVES:** With the right sides together, stitch the sleeve underarm seams; press. Repeat with the cuff linings. Clean-finish one long edge of each cuff lining. With the right sides together, pin one cuff lining (not the finished edge) to one sleeve at the bottom edge and stitch. Press. Repeat with the remaining sleeve and cuff lining.

11 **PRESS THE CUFF LININGS** to the wrong side of the sleeves and topstitch two rows of stitching ½" and ¾" from the lower edge. Hand-tack the cuff linings to the inside of the sleeves at the seam allowances, so you can roll the cuffs to the right side as desired.

12 **ATTACH THE SLEEVES:** Adjust the ease in sleeve cap to fit the armhole (see page 189) and insert the sleeves in the armholes, with the right sides together, matching the sleeve notches. Stitch as on page 190. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

13 **BUTTONHOLES AND BUTTONS:** Set your sewing machine to make a buttonhole that is ⅛" bigger than your button. Stitch a test buttonhole on a scrap piece of fabric that has the same number of layers as the garment. You might want to re-mark your buttonhole and button placement markings by referring to the patterns. Machine-stitch the buttonholes and hand-sew the buttons in place (see page 182).

14 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) on the bottom of the dress.

Serger Option

If you do not have a serger but want to try a stitch that is more professional looking than the zigzag stitch, check your sewing machine manual. Many machines come with an overlock (faux serger) stitch option you can use to finish seam allowances on the inside of the garment.

THE SHEATH WITH RAGLAN SLEEVES

It's tug-of-war, ladies, and I mean war! Having grown up near the beach in Dubai, I feel right at home building sand castles and playing ridiculous games. What better way to be beach ready than by making a statement with bright bold colors and dresses — perfect for that quick-change moment from sand to sea.

MAKE IT

Pitcher Perfect

Pimm's by the pool, in a huge obnoxious pitcher my dad would make, with all the trimmings: cucumbers, mint, orange, the works! I remember feeling terribly naughty when he'd sneak me some of the liqueur-soaked pieces of fruit — the perfect poolside cocktail, light and refreshing. Serve up your own perfect poolside thirst quencher in this bright sheath, for a pitcher-perfect weekend!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your raglan sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 1½" yards of 54" medium-weight cotton
- Fabric 2 (sleeves), 1 yard of 54" medium-weight cotton
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- 18" invisible zipper
- Thread to match

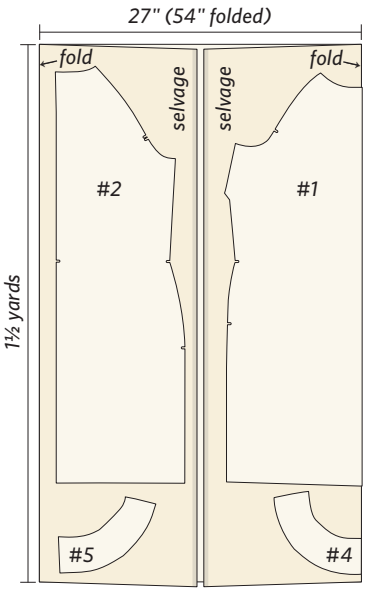
DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS** for the front sheath, back sheath, and raglan sleeve onto pattern paper following the raglan sleeve seamline on the front and back slopers. Include darts, notches, and grainline.

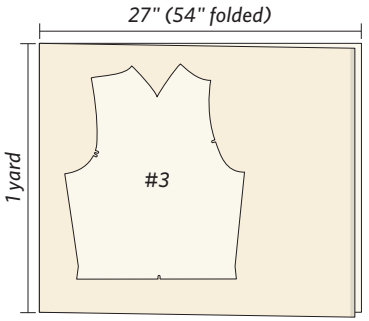
2 **NECKLINE FACING:** Draft a front and back neckline facing following the instructions on page 54. The back neck facing will not be cut on the fabric fold because there is a zipper in this dress (so be sure to add seam allowance to the center back).

3 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to all edges of the dress front, dress back, and facing patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front). Add 1" to the bottom edges for the dress and sleeve hems. Make notches in the front and back armholes to align with the notches on the sleeve.

4 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.



FABRIC 1



FABRIC 2

CUTTING TICKET: Pitcher Perfect

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	2	
#4	Front Neck Facing	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Neck Facing	2	
FABRIC 2			
#3	Raglan Sleeve	2	
INTERFACING			
#4	Front Neck Facing	1	cut on fold
#5	Back Neck Facing	2	

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and armhole openings of the dress and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Sew the front and back darts (see page 183). Press.

5 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the back seam, following instructions for a regular or invisible zipper (see page 193). Close the center back seam from the hem to the bottom of the zipper.

6 **ATTACH THE SLEEVES AND SEW THE SIDE SEAMS** following the instructions on page 190 for attaching raglan sleeves.

7 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

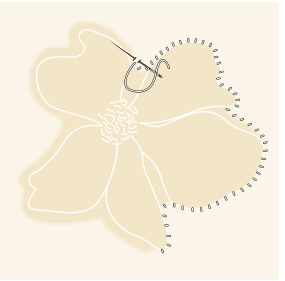
8 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem on the bottom of the sleeve and the bottom of the dress (see page 188).

OWN IT

Outdoorsy Appliqué

Sometimes you find a fabric with a great print, but the allover look is just too much. Sure, you could just use the print as lining, but what good is that? You want everyone to see it! This is where appliqué comes in. Appliqué involves sewing and/or fusing a piece of fabric onto another fabric. I recommend using a fell stitch (see page 179) instead of adhesives — that's just cheating!

- The first step is to select and cut out your appliqué patch. Look through your scraps of fabric for a floral motif or several motifs. Or, cut your own shapes from an interesting section of fabric. As you cut out your patch, leave a ⅛" edge for a seam allowance if desired. (You only need the seam allowance if you prefer a clean-finish. I like a raw edge, but it depends on your style and the project.) Baste your patch in the desired placement on your dress.
- For a clean-finished appliqué, press under the edges of the appliqué and hand-sew through the folded edge. Or, baste the appliqué in place and use the tip of your needle as you sew the appliqué in place to fold under the edge.
- Alternatively, you can hand-sew around the entire edge of each appliqué using the fell (appliqué) stitch (see page 179).



TIP: *To apply an appliqué in the middle of your dress or any area that's hard to reach, try using an embroidery hoop around the appliqué to hold the fabric taut.*

ROCK IT

All Wrapped Up

A recent romantic mini-break boat trip somehow ended up with some rather daring nighttime water skiing. Keeping the '80s alive, we donned glow sticks, including some rather fabulous bunny ears that kept us from being lost in the black sea. With a bikini under my lovely easy-to-whip-on-and-whip-off wrap dress, I was in quicker than you could say "Thank you, Diane von Fürstenberg! The wrap dress was a great idea!"

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your raglan sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- 2 yards of 54" solid color medium-weight cotton fabric
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- Approximately 3 yards of ½" single-fold or ¼" double-fold bias tape, contrast color or matching (see page 181 for how to make your own)
- Thread to match

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE FRONT SHEATH SLOPER:** Fold the pattern paper in half and place the center front of the sloper along the fold of the pattern paper. Trace around the sloper and all pattern markings with your tracing wheel. Unfold the pattern paper so you see an entire front dress. With a pencil, true all the lines. You need a full pattern, rather than the usual half, because the front of the dress is asymmetrical. Make the following changes to the front pattern:

- Measure down the left sleeve seam 1" from the neckline and mark. On the right side, draw another mark at the waistline, just in from the dart closest to the side seam. Join these two marks, using your vary form curve, to draft the wrap neckline opening.
- For the left side of the hem, extend the hemline out 2" and draw in a new side seam, joining the extended hemline to the waist.
- For the right side of the hem, draw a straight, vertical line from the waistline marking to the hem.

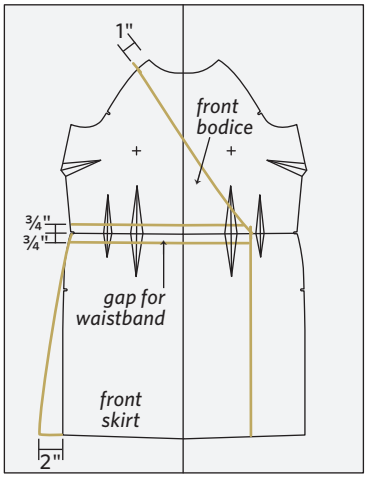
2 **FRONT BODICE:** Using your transparent gridded ruler, draw a line ¾" above and parallel to the waistline.

3 **FRONT SKIRT:** Using your transparent gridded ruler, draw a line ¾" below and parallel to the waistline. This line becomes the top of your skirt pattern. (The space between the bodice and the skirt allows for a 1½"-wide waistband, which you will draft in step 5.)

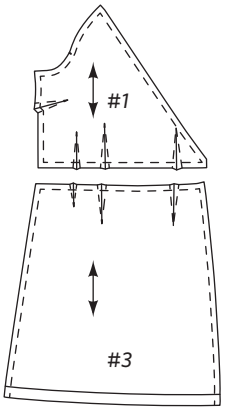
4 **TRACE THE NEW PATTERN PIECES** onto pattern paper. Trace the front bodice separately from the skirt front, following newly drafted lines. Mark notches at the darts and center front and label the pieces correctly.

5 **FRONT WAISTBAND:** Draw a rectangle pattern for the front waistband that is 1½" wide. Match the top length of the rectangle to the bottom edge of the bodice, deducting for the width of the darts. Match the bottom edge to the top of the skirt in the same way. Using the draft in previous steps as a guide, match the angle of the front bodice at the front dress opening.

FRONT DRAFT



Steps 1, 2, and 3

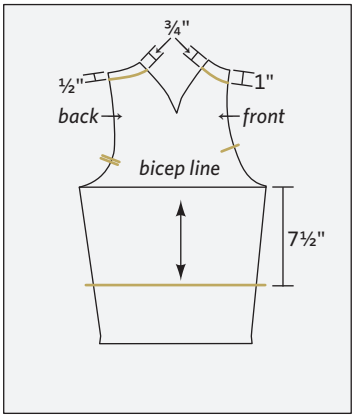


On the left side of the waistband (the side seam), make a notch ¼" from the top and another at the bottom to mark an opening in the side seam stitching. This will allow for an opening through which the waistband tie will be inserted (to hold the dress closed).

6 **TIE PATTERN:** Draw a rectangle 1¼" by 23". Shape one end of the rectangle at a 45-degree angle.

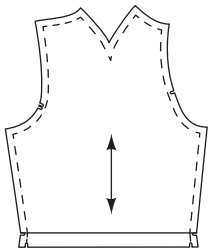
7 **TRACE THE BACK SHEATH SLOPER** onto pattern paper, including the grainline, darts, and notches. The back does not have a waistband, but you should align the left side of the back sloper with the front bodice to mark the top of the waistband on the back side seam.

- Drop the back neckline slightly by measuring ½" down from the neckline at the center back and at the neckline where the back dress joins the sleeve. Use your curved ruler to redraw the new dropped neckline.
- Extend the hem at the side seam out 2" to match the front.



8 **TRACE THE RAGLAN SLEEVE SLOPER** onto pattern paper, including the grainline and notches. Make the following changes on the sleeve draft:

- ***The neckline*** was changed on the front and back slopers, so you need to make the same adjustments to the sleeve.
- ***For the front***, make a mark ¾" at the dart edge and 1" at the sleeve edge down from the old neck edge. Blend the markings to create the new line. Cut away the excess.
- ***For the back***, draw a new line ¾" at the dart edge and ½" at the sleeve edge down from the old neck edge. Blend the markings to create the new line.
- Shorten the sleeve length to 7½" from the bicep line (or choose your own length).



9 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to the edges of all the patterns except the following edges, which will be finished with bias tape:

- Add ¼" seam allowance to the front edge of the front skirt, the front edge of the front bodice (from the shoulder seam to the waist seam), the neckline of the back dress, and the neckline of the sleeves.

- Add 1" to the bottom of the back dress, front skirt, and sleeves for hem allowance.
- The center back of the dress is cut on the fabric fold.

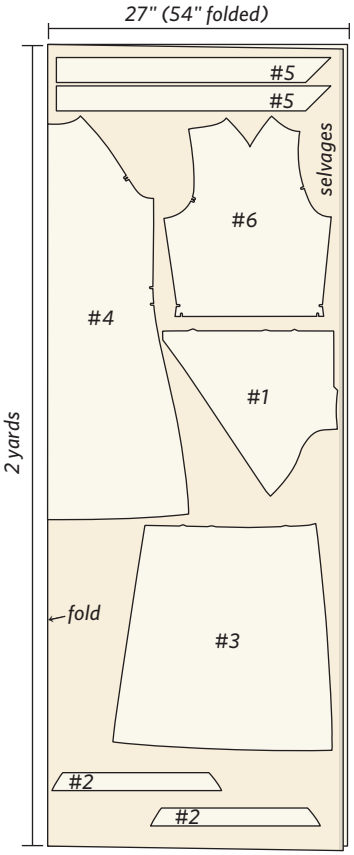
10 MEASURE, CUT, AND LABEL: Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed (see page 56). When you're satisfied that everything is in order, cut out the pieces and label them accordingly. Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, such as the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: All Wrapped Up

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Bodice	2	
#2	Front Waistband	4	
#3	Front Skirt	2	
#4	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#5	Waistband Tie	4	
#6	Sleeves	2	
INTERFACING			
#2	Front Waistband	2	
#5	Waistband Tie	2	



CUTTING LAYOUT

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of two waistband ties and two front waistbands (see page 22).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and front dress opening (see page 180).

4 **DARTS:** Stitch the darts on the front bodice and skirt, and then the back darts (see page 183). Stitch the sleeve darts. Press all seams.

5 **SLEEVES:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the sleeves to the bodice front and dress back so the notches align. Press the sleeve seams open.

6 **BIAS BINDING:** Attach single-fold or double-fold bias tape to both skirt front edges and around the shoulder and neckline edges in one continuous seam (see page 181).

7 **TIE ENDS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the two sets of tie ends (one interfaced and one not) together around all edges except the short, straight ends. Trim the seam allowance and turn the tie ends right side out. A loop turner will make it easier to turn the tie ends right side out, or use a safety pin to thread the ties.

8 **ATTACH THE WAISTBAND TO THE BODICE:** With the right sides together, pin the bottom edge of one bodice front to the top edge of one interfaced waistband. Align center front notches. Baste them together. Then, pin one non-interfaced waistband to the wrong side of the bodice so all the raw edges are aligned. The waistbands should extend beyond the bodice front and side seam by ½". Stitch through all three layers. Trim the seam allowances. Press the long edge of the non-interfaced

waistband ½" to the wrong side. Repeat with the remaining bodice and two waistbands.

9 **ATTACH THE WAISTBAND TO THE SKIRT:** With the right sides together, pin the bottom of each interfaced (right side) waistband to the top edge of one of the skirts. The waistband should extend beyond the skirt front by ½" at the side seam and front. Align center front and dart notches. Stitch, press, and trim seam allowances. (The waistband wrong side will be finished in step 11. Just leave it be for now.)

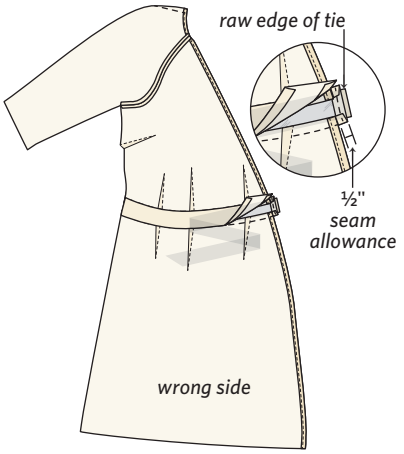
10 **ATTACH THE TIE ENDS:** With the raw edges even, pin the unfinished edge of the tie ends to the right side of the waistbands and baste them together ¼" from the edge.

11 **FINISH THE WAISTBAND:** Fold the bodice down over the waistband and skirt so the right sides are together and the tie ends are sandwiched between. Pin and stitch the narrow ends of the waistbands together. Trim the seam allowances and turn the waistband to the wrong side. Slipstitch the pressed, loose edge of the waistband to cover the seam.

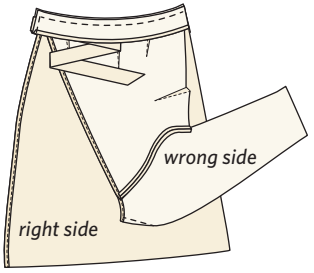
12 **RIGHT SIDE SEAM:** With the right sides together, pin the sleeve underarm seam together and the front dress and back dress together at the right side seam so the waistband seams align. Starting at the dress hem, stitch the side seam and underarm seam in one continuous seam. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

13 **LEFT SIDE SEAM:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the left side seam just like the right side seam, *except* stop and start stitching at the markings for the waistband openings (¼" above and below the waistband seams). Backstitch at each end of the break in the stitching. Press the seam allowances open at the waistband and from the right side, edgestitch around the opening to hold the seam allowances out of the way.

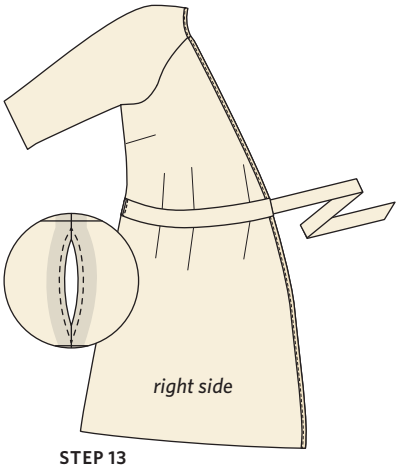
14 **HEM THE DRESS** and sleeves with a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188). Press.



STEP 10



STEP 11



STEP 13

THE SHEATH DRESS WITH STRAPLESS VARIATIONS

I love these strapless sheath dresses; they are super girly if you want them to be. Notice how the choice of fabrics can really transform the basic strapless dress. The UK has the Brighton Beach Pier, in New York it is Coney Island. Wherever you are, be it the Jersey Shore or your local seaside resort, these dresses are perfect for fairground rides, games, and shows.

MAKE IT

Peep Show

Eyelet cotton has such a spring-turning-into-summer vibe. It's fresh, feminine, and flirty. Add any color lining under the eyelet to give it your signature touch. I love orange, which can be a hard color to wear; but in this case, where it's just peeking through, orange is the perfect "pop" color.

NEED IT

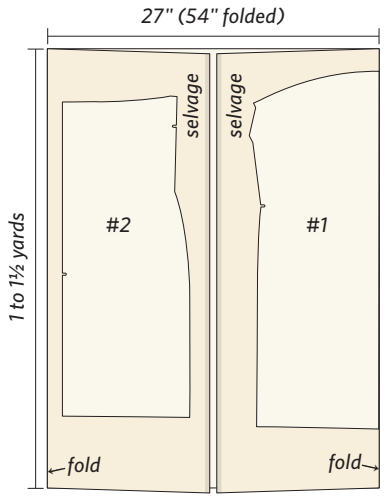
- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1 to 1½ yards of 54" white eyelet cotton, depending on your size and the length
- 1 to 1½ yards of 54" colorful lining
- 14" invisible zipper
- Approximately 2 yards of ½"-wide silicone-backed elastic
- Thread to match

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE SLOPERS** for the front sheath and back sheath around the strapless seamline, onto pattern paper. Along the center back edge, measure 14" down from the top and mark a notch for the end of the zipper placement.

2 **ADD** ½" seam allowance to all edges of the dress front and dress back patterns except for the center front. Add 1" to the bottom edges for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

3 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.



CUTTING LAYOUT, SAME FOR EXTERIOR FABRIC AND LINING

CUTTING TICKET: Peep Show

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	2	
LINING			
#1	Front Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Back Dress	2	

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings, like the darts, to the fabric (see page 61).

Design Notes

You don't need interfacing for this dress, nor do you need to clean-finish the seam allowance, because the dress is fully lined.

SEW IT

1 **DARTS:** Pin and stitch the front and back darts (see page 183). Press. Repeat for the lining.

2 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edge of the neckline (see page 180).

3 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress together at the side seams. Press. Repeat with the lining.

4 **INSTALL THE INVISIBLE ZIPPER** in the center back of the dress only, following the instructions on page 194. Close the center back seam from the hemline to the bottom of the zipper.

5 **HAND-SEW** the silicone elastic near the top edge of the dress (from center back to center back) with invisible slipstitches, so the stitching doesn't show on the right side. The elastic should help hold the dress up. If slippage is a problem, consider making pretty eyelet straps or using ribbon to hold the dress up.

6 **ATTACH THE LINING TO THE DRESS AND ZIPPER:**

- Open the zipper. Turn the dress wrong side out, and with the right sides together pin the lining to the dress around the top and down the center back with the zipper sandwiched between them.
- Starting at the bottom of the zipper, stitch up one side of the zipper. Pivot at the top edge to stitch across the top to the other side of the zipper. Pivot again and stitch the other side of the zipper. Don't stitch as close to the zipper teeth as you did for the main fabric because you don't want the lining to get caught in the zipper.
- With the right sides together, stitch the center back lining seam from the end of the zipper to the hem.
- Trim the corners and press. Understitch the dress and lining at the top edge as close as you can to the center back (see page 180). Turn the press right side out and press.

7 **HEM THE DRESS:** and the lining separately, each with 1" double-fold hem (see page 188). Press.

OWN IT

Sunset Strip

Ombré is the posh term for the process called dip-dye. This simple technique can give a white fabric new dimension, just like fairground magic!

You'll need fabric dye, rubber gloves, a bucket, measuring cup, stainless steel spoon, a broom, and some dishwashing liquid. Use a plastic tarp to protect your work surface from dye. Wearing rubber gloves, prepare the dye by following the manufacturer's instructions. Wet the dress with water and squeeze out the excess water. Mark where you want the gradients of the ombré to change with pins. Test a piece of your fabric to gauge how long to soak the dress for each layer.

Starting at the top, wrap about half the dress around the broom handle. If you want, you can secure it with a rubber band or clip. Then begin to dye.

- **BOTTOM IS THE RICHEST COLOR:** Holding the pole, dip the bottom of the dress into the dye and soak it up to your first pin notch, for 3 to 10 minutes depending on the shade you want. Remember it will remain in the dye bath while you color the upper part of the dress.
- **NEXT-LIGHTEST COLOR:** Lower the dress deeper into the dye, up to your second pin notch, and swirl it for 3 to 8 minutes. Lift and lower the dress until you have the desired contrasting shade.
- **LIGHTEST COLOR:** Remove the dress from the broom and lower it into the dye to your final pin notch or to the top of the dress. You many only need to leave it in the dye for 1 minute.
- **RINSE OUT THE DYE:** Remove the dress from the dye and wring out excess liquid. Holding the dress from the top so the washed-out dye doesn't darken your lighter sections, rinse it under cool running water in the bathtub for 3 to 4 minutes, then rinse in warm water until the water runs clear.
- **WASH THE DRESS:** In the bathtub or sink, wash the dress in warm water with fabric detergent. Rinse thoroughly and wring out the excess water. Machine-dry.

ROCK IT

Sunday-Best Button Dress

Get playful in this button-front sleeveless shift dress. Choose a textured cotton to add some personality to this little strapless number. For those of you who are not risk takers, here is a good opportunity to push the boundaries a little and have fun with the buttons. Enjoy the end of your weekend, looking and feeling fabulous!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your sheath sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1¼ to 1½ yards of 54" medium-weight textured cotton
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- 8 buttons, ¾" diameter
- Thread to match

Vintage Buttons DIY Tip

Turn something old into something new and get thrifty when you buy some unique vintage buttons. Different designs in the same size are always fun! Or get some spray paint and make them match!

DRAFT IT

1 TRACE THE FRONT SHEATH SLOPER onto pattern paper. You can bypass the draft because we are not making changes to the silhouette.

- Extend the center front ¾" by drawing a vertical line for the folded edge of the center front placket. This will be the foldline.
- Extend another 1½"; this will become the back of the button placket.
- Mark a notch placement at the neck and hem edge.
- Mark ¾"-long vertical buttonholes on the center front line. Mark the top edge of the first buttonhole ¾" down from the top of the dress. Mark subsequent buttonholes 2½" apart until you are about 2" to 4" above the bottom edge.

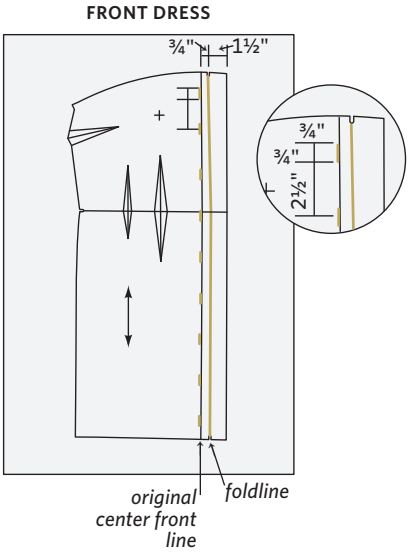
2 TRACE THE BACK SHEATH SLOPER onto pattern paper, following the strapless seamline, including grainline and pattern markings. There are no design changes, so again you can bypass the draft.

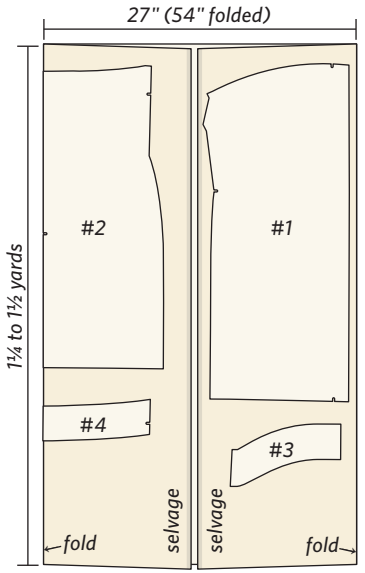
3 DRAFT THE NECKLINE FACING: Trace around the front and back necklines onto separate pattern paper and draft a 2"-wide facing for both (see page 54). Make note of the following instructions:

- The front facing should begin ¾" from the original center front and extend to the side seam.
- Temporarily tape the back darts closed before you trace the back neckline and draft the facing.

4 ADD ½" seam allowance to all edges of the front dress, back dress, and facings, except for those cut on the fabric fold (back dress and facing). Add 1" to the bottom edges for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

5 MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT: Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on page 134 for numbering the pattern pieces.





CUTTING LAYOUT

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Use tailor's chalk to mark your notches, foldline, and buttonholes on the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: Sunday-Best Button Dress

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Dress	2	
#2	Back Dress	1	cut on fold
#3	Front Facing	2	
#4	Back Facing	1	cut on fold
INTERFACING			
#3	Front Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric
#4	Back Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
	Placket	2	cut 1½" strip × length of center front placket

SEW IT

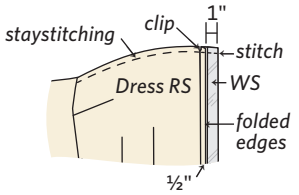
1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184). Fuse interfacing to the wrong side of the placket between the foldline and the cut edge.

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** around the front and back neckline on the dress pieces (see page 180).

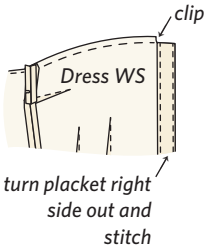
4 **DARTS:** Stitch the front and back darts (see page 183). Press.

5 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress together at the side seams. Press.



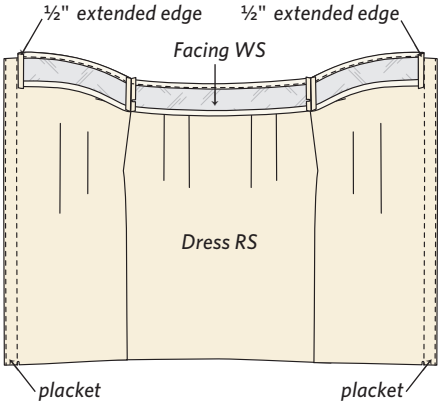
6 **MAKE THE PLACKETS:** Sew each placket as follows:

- Press under the placket along the ½" vertical seam allowance line, to the wrong side.
- Fold the placket with right sides together at the foldline, going by the notches you made earlier. Stitch across the top of the placket with a ½" seam allowance, backstitching at the inside fold.
- Clip the seam allowance of the top edge of the dress at the inside fold of the placket.
- Turn the placket to the right side and press. Topstitch close to both long folded edges of the placket.



7 **ATTACH THE FACING:** Prepare the facing (see page 184), and attach the front pieces to the back pieces at the side seams. Press. Then:

- Pin the facing to the neck edge, right sides facing and matching the side seams. You want the ends of the facing to extend ½" beyond the edge of each stitched placket (trim as needed).
- Stitch the facing in place, backstitching at the points where the facing touches the plackets.
- Understitch (see page 180) the facing seam allowance, and press the ½" extended raw edges to the wrong side.
- Turn the facing to the interior, press, and hand-sew the folded edge of the facing to the placket. Hand-tack in place at seam allowances (see page 179).



8 **BUTTONS AND BUTTONHOLES:** Make buttonholes ⅛" longer than your buttons at the placement markings. Refer to the pattern if the markings have rubbed off the dress. It's worth doing a text buttonhole on a scrap piece of fabric before making them on your garment. Hand-sew the buttons to align with the buttonholes.

9 **HEM THE DRESS** with a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188). Press.

CHAPTER 5

THE PRINCESS SEAM DRESS

Princess seam dresses are fitted, as are the sheaths, but instead of darts there are vertical seams down the front and back of the dress. Formal dresses or party frocks are often designed with princess seams, which can be beautifully form fitting. The vertical seams flatter a woman's shape and help to elongate the body. Cheers! Let's get this party started!

All of the dresses in this chapter are created using the princess seam sloper, with regular sleeve, raglan sleeve, and sleeveless adaptations. The instructions assume that you've already made a sloper, based on the sloper provided or customized from your own measurements (see chapter 2).

THE PRINCESS SEAM DRESS WITH SET-IN SLEEVE VARIATIONS

Elegant and simple, the set-in sleeve princess seam dress is easily transformed into a fitted evening dress. You can rock it with a straight skirt, a pencil skirt, or even a flared or circular skirt on the bottom portion of the dress. Whether you're heading for a cocktail party or after-work drinks, these dresses are sophisticated and fun, making them appropriate for all evening occasions. You can even add piping down the front and back seams the same way we did on the *Piping Hot!* dress (see page 70).

MAKE IT

Princess Perfect

Who doesn't want to feel like a princess at least every now and then? This classic design is perfect for that modern-day princess in you — yeah, the one who still has to go to work, put the kids to bed, and feed her family. In dreamy sea foam green and gold glitter heels, I'm feeling *Princess Perfect*! Fabric choice, like this border print, also makes it easy to design so many variations of this simple dress.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" fabric
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- 18" invisible zipper
- Thread to match

DRAFT IT

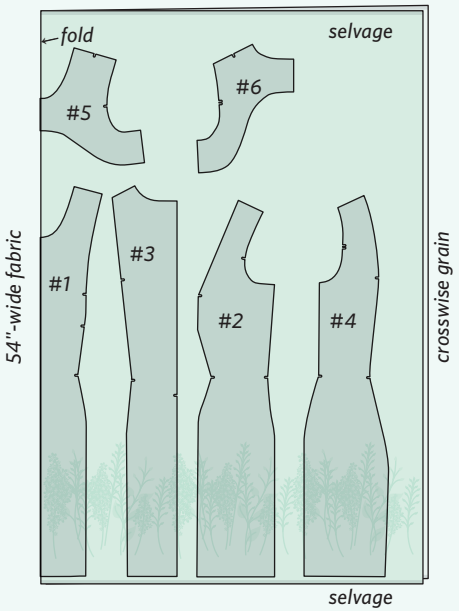
1 **TRACE THE FRONT SLOPERS** for the front center princess dress and front side princess dress onto pattern paper, including grainline and notches. Trace the set-in sleeve design line on the front side sloper.

2 **FRONT COMBINATION FACING:** Tape together the front slopers at the princess seams. Trace around the neckline, shoulder seam, armhole, and side seam to make a combination facing (see page 55).

BORDER PRINTS

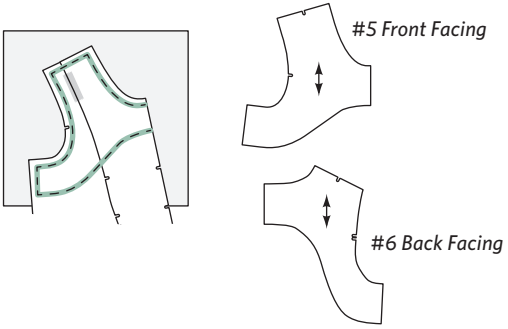
A simple silhouette provides opportunity to be creative with your fabric choice. I wanted to keep the look simple and elegant but not boring. A border print fabric features a design printed only along one selvage; it's a subtle design detail, perfect for a princess seam dress.

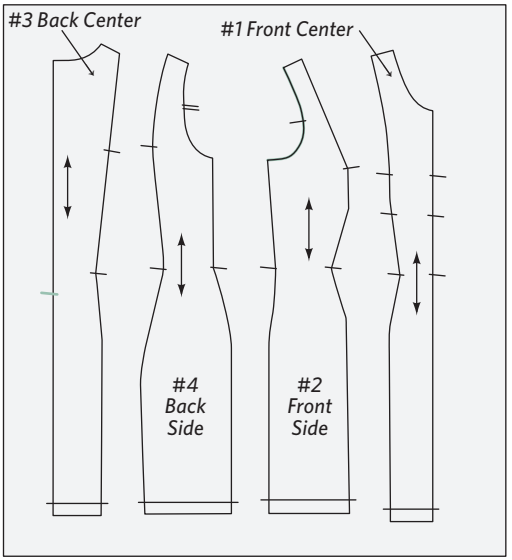
Because the design runs along the selvage, you will have to cut your pattern pieces with the grainline arrow running parallel to the crosswise grain (instead of parallel to the selvage) and the fabric must be as wide as your pattern pieces are long. If you use a border print, lay out your pieces carefully so the print will match up at all the vertical seams.



CUTTING LAYOUT FOR BORDER PRINTS

3 TRACE THE BACK DRESS AND DRAFT THE FACINGS:
Trace the back center and back side princess slopers, including the grainline arrows and notches. Draft the facings as for the front and as on page 55. Make a mark for the bottom of the zipper on the center back seam 18" from the neckline.





4 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front and center front facing). Add 1" to the bottom edge for the hem allowance.

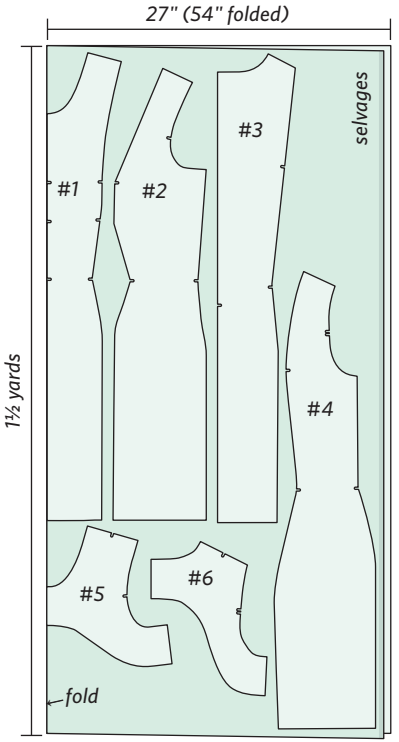
5 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

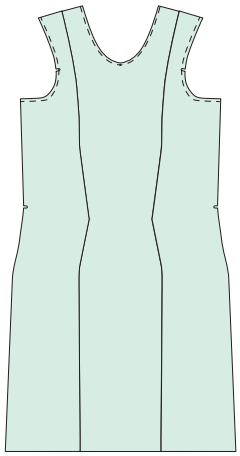
Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: *Princess Perfect*

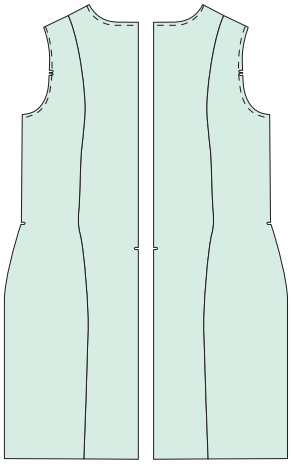
PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Center Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Dress	2	
#3	Back Center Dress	2	
#4	Back Side Dress	2	
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#6	Back Facing	2	
INTERFACING			
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Back Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric



CUTTING LAYOUT



FRONT DRESS



BACK DRESS

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline, armhole openings, and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **FRONT DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the two front side pieces to the sides of the front center dress. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

5 **BACK DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

6 **SIDE SEAMS:** Pin the front dress and back dress together at the side seams with right sides facing. Stitch, then clip curved seam allowances and press.

7 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the center back seam, following instructions for an invisible zipper (see page 194). Close the center back seam from the hem to the bottom of the zipper.

8 **COMBINATION FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

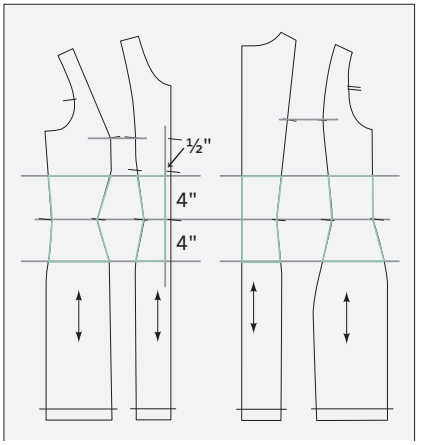
9 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) at the hemline. Press.

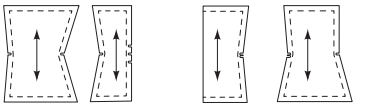
OWN IT

Belt It!

I love happy mistakes! When things don't go as you've planned — but turn out even better — is when you feel like a designer. In one of my fashion design classes, I made what I thought was a super cute obi-style belt in a black and yellow embroidered upholstery fabric, with a thin layer of quilt batting in between to give it texture and shape. My fashion design teacher waltzed over, and rather than tying the belt around her waist, she tied it around her neck. Brilliant!

- Trace all four princess seam slopers around the waist only as shown, 4" above and below the waist. Add seam allowance to all edges except the center back.
- Add two notches for ribbon placement on the center front, evenly spaced on either side of the waistline seam. (If your ribbon is 1", notch ½" above and below.)
- Cut each pattern in your main fabric, lining fabric, and a layer of batting to give the belt some thickness.
- Stitch together matching seams for the main fabric, then the lining, and assemble the belt, attaching the ribbon at placement marks.





#2 belt front side *#1 belt front center* *#3 belt back side* *#4 belt back center*

ROCK IT

Flirty Flare

This feminine, flirty design is my go-to dress. The flared skirt is an easy change to the silhouette. Add a tutu underneath for more drama — and I like drama! Even without "drama" the design is still fabulous. I have made this dress in so many different fabrics: in simple cottons to wear to work, and in wonderful eveningwear fabrics, such as satin, sequins, and brocades, for formal events. For the dress shown here, I decided to use silk brocade, which gives the silhouette more structure and is dramatic yet ladylike. Experiment with fabrics to see which you like the best.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam sloper (see chapter 2)
- 2½ yards of 54" fabric (I used metallic silk brocade)
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- 18" invisible zipper
- Thread to match

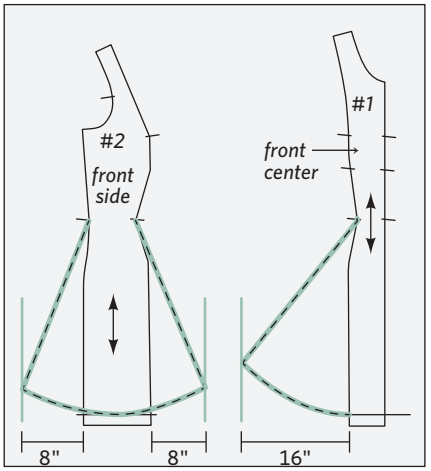
DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE THE FRONT SLOPERS** for the front center princess dress and front side princess dress onto pattern paper, allowing plenty of room to add length and flare to the skirt. Trace all grainline arrows and notches. Trace the set-in sleeve seamline on the front side sloper.

- Increase the length of skirt on the front and side front drafts. (In the example, the skirt measures 18" from the waistline.) Make sure this measurement is consistent at the center front and side seams.

NOTE: *The total circumference of the hem needs to be at least 128" to create the circle skirt effect. If you add 16" to the hem width of each pattern piece, that should put you in the ballpark, depending on the size of your dress.*

- On the front dress draft, extend the bottom (hem) line out 16" from the princess seam. Use a long ruler to join the new hemline to the waist. Repeat for the side front draft, extending the hemline at both the princess and side seams 8" on both sides (for a total of 16").
- Use your vary form ruler to redraw a smoothly curved hem.
- Trace the draft onto pattern paper, including grainline and notches. Label your pattern pieces.

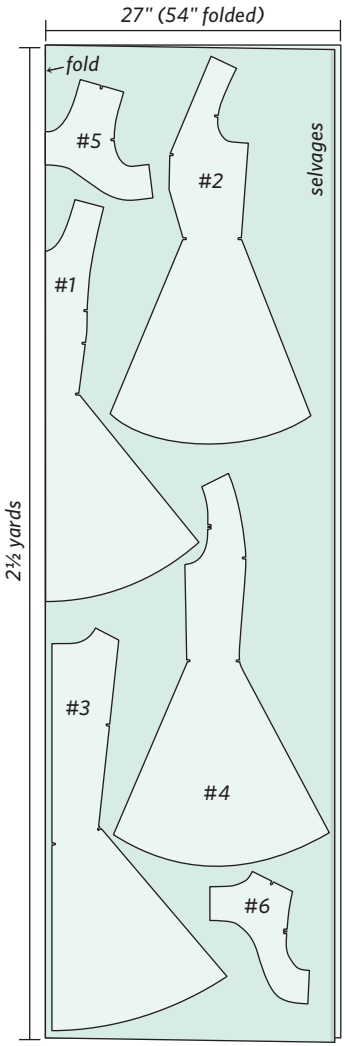


2 **FRONT COMBINATION FACING:** Tape together the front slopers at the princess seams. Draft a 2"- or 3"-wide combination facing around the front neckline and underarm (see page 55).

3 **TRACE THE BACK SLOPERS** for back center and back side pattern pieces in the same way as for the front, allowing plenty of room to add length and flare to the skirt. Trace the grainline and all pattern markings. Along the center back edge, measure 18" down from the top and make a notch for the end of the zipper placement. Trace the set-in sleeve seamline on the back side slopers. Adjust the length of the slopers and the flare at the bottom hemlines as for the front slopers. When you're satisfied with the changes, trace the draft onto pattern paper and label.

4 **BACK COMBINATION FACING:** Make the back facing the same as for the front, but refer to page 55 for how to allow for the center back zipper opening.

5 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front dress and front facing). Add 1" to the bottom edge for the hem allowance.



CUTTING LAYOUT

6 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: *Flirty Flare*

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Center Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Dress	2	
#3	Back Center Dress	2	
#4	Back Side Dress	2	
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#6	Back Facing	2	
INTERFACING			
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Back Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and armhole openings on the dress and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **FRONT DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch one front side piece to each side of the front center dress. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

5 **BACK DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

6 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the center back seam, following the instructions for an invisible zipper (see page 194). Close the center back seam from the hem to the bottom of the zipper.

7 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, stitch the dress front to the dress back at the side seams. Clip curved seam allowances and press.

8 **COMBINATION FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

9 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem (see page 188) at the hemline. Press.

THE PRINCESS SEAM WITH RAGLAN SLEEVE VARIATIONS

The raglan sleeve design offers some great options for the princess seam silhouette. You can really play with the slopers to create some stunning dresses perfect for special moments. Now's the time to take some risks with luxurious fabric to make something really special.

MAKE IT

First Impressions

Whether it's getting together for drinks with your new coworkers or meeting your boyfriend's parents for the first time, first impressions are so important. People tend to make their judgments about you based on your appearance, within the first few seconds of meeting you. Why not get things off to a good start?

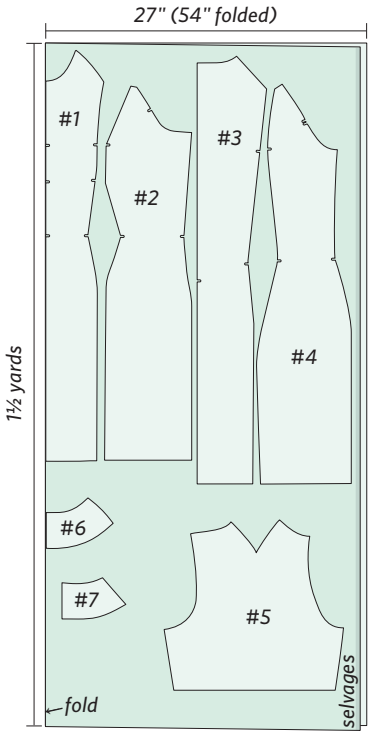
NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam sloper (see chapter 2)
- Your raglan sleeve sloper (see chapter 2)
- 1½ yards of 54" silk fabric
- ½ yard of fusible interfacing
- 18" invisible zipper
- Thread to match

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE ALL THE FRONT AND BACK SLOPERS** for the princess dress onto pattern paper, including grainline arrows and notches. Trace the raglan sleeve seamline on the side slopers (front and back).

2 **FRONT AND BACK FACINGS:** Tape together the front slopers at the princess seam and the back patterns at the princess seam. Draft a 2"-wide front neck facing and a 2"-wide back neck facing with a center back zipper opening onto separate pattern paper (see page 55).



3 **TRACE THE RAGLAN SLEEVE SLOPER** onto pattern paper. Decide on the length of your sleeve and draw a new hemline. Cut off the bottom of the sleeve below the new hemline.

4 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front and front facing). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress and sleeve patterns for the hem allowance.

5 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on the next page for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric (see page 61).

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **FRONT DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch one front side piece to each side of the front center dress. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

CUTTING TICKET: First Impressions

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
MAIN FABRIC			
#1	Front Center Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Dress	2	
#3	Back Center Dress	2	
#4	Back Side Dress	2	
#5	Sleeve	2	
#6	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#7	Back Facing	2	
INTERFACING			
#6	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#7	Back Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric

5 **BACK DRESS:** With right sides together, stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece. Clip seam allowances and press.

6 **PREPARE AND ATTACH THE SLEEVES (STITCH SIDE SEAMS)** following the instructions on page 190.

7 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the center back (see page 194).

8 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing (see pages 184 to 186).

9 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin the front dress and back dress together at the side seams, matching the sleeve underarm seams. Begin at the dress hem and sew up the side seam and over the underarm seam to the sleeve hem. Clip the curves at the underarm and press.

10 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem on the bottom of the dress and sleeves (see page 188).

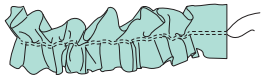
OWN IT

Ruffle and Ready

Making ruffles is fun and so easy that you might go a little ruffle mad! You can make them in contrasting or matching fabrics. You can add a ruffle to the hem, which will transform the dress without detracting from the style or shape of the dress. You can even cover a whole dress in ruffles, which is something I would totally do. Have fun and be creative.

To make the ruffle shown, you'll need ¼ yard of matching or contrasting fabric.

- Measure and cut your ruffle piece. To determine the length of the piece, measure the circumference of the dress at the hemline and add 1" for seam allowances. Multiply this by 1.5 (or 2 if you want a fuller ruffle). If you want a raw edge ruffle (as shown here) cut the ruffle strip 3½" wide.
  NOTE: *A raw edge looks great if you are working with taffeta, but if you are using silk, it is better to clean-finish the edges with a narrow hem. In that case, add another 1" to the width. Press under a ¼" double-fold hem on each long edge.*
- To gather the ruffle, set your machine stitch to the longest basting stitch and stitch two parallel horizontal lines ½" apart through the center of the ruffle. Knot the two top threads together at one end and pull from the unknotted end. Keep pulling across the fabric, moving the gathers with your fingers as you go along until the length of the ruffle is equal to the circumference of your dress at the hem. Pin the open ends of the ruffle with the right sides together. Keep the pulled basting threads out of the way (in case you need to adjust the gathers) and stitch to form a circle.
- Pin the wrong side of the ruffle onto the bottom of the right side of the dress, with the center of the gathers about 1" above the dress hem. Adjust the gathers as needed and stitch the ruffle in place.



ROCK IT

Sweetheart Sundress

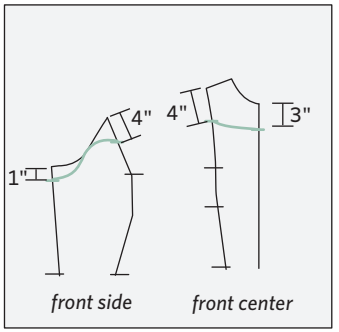
I designed this gorgeous summer frock many years ago, inspired by a vintage dress I found in New York City. The silhouette is timeless, flattering, and comfortable for all shapes. As for this design, I decided to throw a bit of a wild card into the mix! This sundress has our lovely princess seams on top, but then I thought it would be super useful for you to be able to make a square variation of the circle skirt. Because it is cut square instead of round, the hem is uneven, giving this skirt a playful and unique spin on the simple circle skirt.

The skirt is a super-easy pattern to make, and I use it all the time when I want to whip up something quick and impress my friends with a "Yeah, I just made this." You know you are dying to say something like that, right? Have fun making this dress and have even more fun wearing it.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam sloper (see chapter 2)
- 3 yards of 54" medium-weight cotton fabric
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- 14" zipper
- Loop turner
- Thread to match

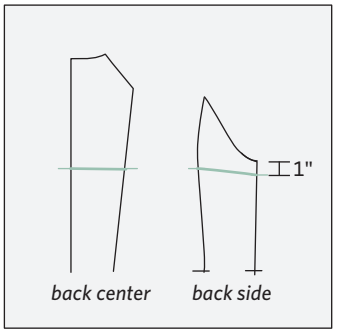
DRAFT THE BODICE



1 **TRACE THE FRONT SLOPERS** for the princess dress, *only to the waistline,* onto pattern paper, including grainline arrows and notches. Trace the raglan sleeve seamline on the front side sloper. Make the following design adjustments:

- Lower and shape the front center by measuring and marking 3" down from the top edge along the center front. Mark 4" down from the top on the shoulder seam side. Use your curved ruler to join the two markings to create a new neckline.
- On the front side pattern, mark 4" down from the shoulder seam, to match the front center pattern. Lower the side seam 1". Use your curved ruler to join the markings in a gentle curve, as shown.

NOTE: *The strap is going to join the front bodice at the princess seam, so there is no need to notch the bodice patterns.*



2 **TRACE FRONT PATTERNS** from the draft and add ½" seam allowance. Transfer grainlines and notches.

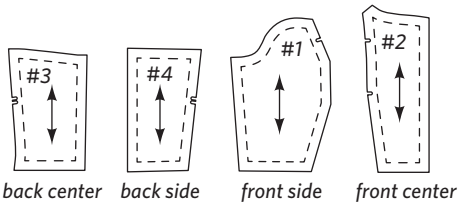
3 **FRONT NECK FACING:** Temporarily tape the patterns for the front bodice and side front bodice together at the princess seam. Draw a 2"-wide front facing (see page 55). You can skip the draft step, add seam allowance and grainline, and cut out the pattern.

4 **TRACE THE BACK SLOPERS** for the princess dress, *only to the waistline*, onto pattern paper, including grainline arrows and notches. Trace the raglan sleeve design line on the back side sloper, then measure 1" down from the underarm edge to match the front side. Draw a line straight across both pieces to form the top edge of the back bodice.

5 **TRACE BACK PATTERNS** from the draft and add ½" seam allowance. Transfer grainlines and notches.

6 **BACK NECK FACING:** Trace and cut out the pattern as you did for the front facing.

7 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket on page 157 for numbering the pattern pieces.



DRAFT AND CUT OUT THE SQUARE SKIRT

1 **LAY OUT THE FABRIC:** Cut a large square that uses the entire width of your fabric: 54" × 54". If you are substituting fabric that is narrower in width, for instance 45", be aware that your square will not only be smaller, the length of your dress will be considerably shorter. It's best to stick with wider fabrics for this dress, unless you would be happy with a short version.

2 **FOLD THE FABRIC** in half, then fold it in half again in the other direction to make a square. Lay the fabric out flat on a cutting surface.

3 **CALCULATE, MARK, AND CUT THE WAISTLINE:**

- Measure your waistline. Since there will be a center back seam allowance for the zipper placement, add 1" (for ½" on either side of the zipper). Divide the total by 6. This is an approximation, so it's okay to round up to the nearest ½". Let's call this number W, for Waist.
- Find a piece of string that is longer than W. Tie tailor's chalk to one end of the string, then measure along the string as far as W and make a mark. Tie a knot in the string at that point.
- Put a pin through the knot and stick the pin into the double-folded corner. Using the string like a compass, draw an arc on the fabric from fold to fold. Add ½" seam allowance, using your grid ruler and chalk. This is the waistline.
- Cut the fabric on the chalk line.

4 **OPEN THE FABRIC:** You will have a big square with a circle in the middle. Draw the center back seam with a ruler and chalk, from the waist

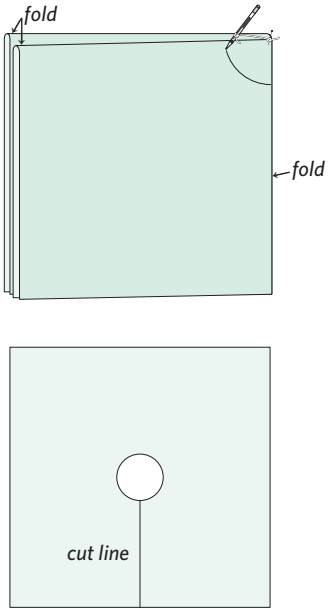
DESIGNER TIP FOR PINNING THE SKIRT TO THE BODICE

When it's time to pin the skirt to the bodice, you'll find one of three things:

- The waist opening is too small on the skirt to attach to the bodice. Don't worry; you can refold the fabric back into a square and carefully trim off the amount you need around the waistline edge. Use your ruler and tailor's chalk to mark the new waistline to match the dress bodice waistline measurement.
- The waist opening is too large on the skirt to attach to the bodice. Increase the seam allowance at the back, ease the skirt waistline fabric to fit, or even gather it; it'll look cute. There is always a solution, and as Tim Gunn from *Project Runway* always says, "Make it work!"
- The waist opening on the skirt is a perfect fit — congratulations!

opening down to the cut edge along the straight grainline and in the center of the square.

5 **MARK FOR ZIPPER PLACEMENT:** Mark 6" down on the center back from the waistline to mark the end of the zipper (8" on the bodice, plus 6" on the skirt allows for a 14" zipper).

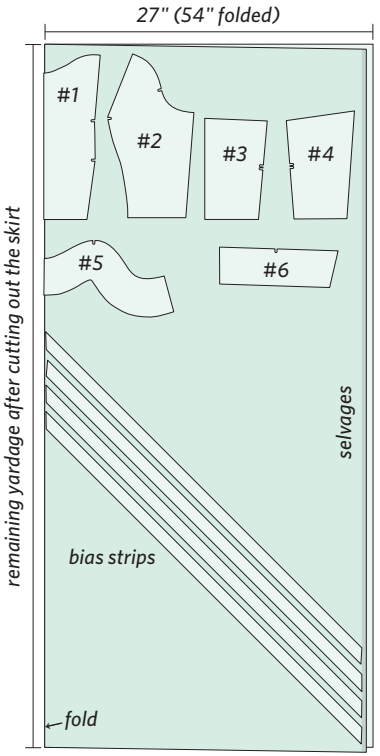


CUT OUT THE BODICE

Arrange and cut out your bodice pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric.

CUTTING TICKET: *Sweetheart Sundress*

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Center Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Dress	2	
#3	Back Center Dress	2	
#4	Back Side Dress	2	
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#6	Back Facing	2	
	Square Skirt	1	(see cutting instructions, page 155)
	Bias Strips	4	cut 1"-wide bias strips to desired length, piece as needed
INTERFACING			
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Back Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric



CUTTING LAYOUT

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **STRAPS:** Make the spaghetti straps ¼" wide, each from a 1" bias strip (see page 181).

5 **FRONT BODICE:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch one front side piece to each side of the front center bodice. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

6 **BACK BODICE:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

7 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back bodice pieces together at the side seams. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

8 **ATTACH THE SKIRT TO THE BODICE:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the skirt to the bottom edge of the bodice, leaving the center back open. Clip the curved seam allowances and press. See the Designer Tip for Pinning the Skirt to the Bodice on page 156.

9 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the back, following instructions for an invisible zipper (see page 194).

10 **POSITION THE STRAPS:** Pin the unfinished edges of each strap to each princess seam with the raw edges aligned. Baste them in place.

11 **ATTACH THE NECK FACING** as on page 184. Be sure to catch the edges of the straps in the stitching and refer to how to attach a facing with a center back zipper opening (page 185).

12 **HEM THE DRESS:** Finish the dress with a narrow hem by pressing the bottom edge ¼" to the wrong side and then ¼" again and stitching close to the edge.

THE STRAPLESS PRINCESS SEAM DRESS

Every girl needs a gorgeous strapless number to show off her tanned shoulders (fake tan if it may be!) at a formal event, wedding, or red carpet event. As you already know, the princess seam dresses are fitted and elegant. These gorgeous dresses, made from luxurious fabrics, are perfect for those evening occasions when you want to put on your best hand-me-down jewelry from your grandmother or that special necklace that draws all the attention to your décolleté.

MAKE IT

Enchanted Evening

A basic (and not *too* risky) strapless dress should be a closet staple. Strapless dresses are not just cocktail attire, when they are done right. I chose this lovely lilac silk fabric because I think it makes a great strapless dress. It is elegant for enchanted summer evening affairs, but when teamed with a big brown faux fur coat or cape, it works just as well for winter nights out.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam slopers (see chapter 2)
- 1 yard of 54" silk or satin fabric
- ¼ yard fusible interfacing
- 14" invisible zipper
- Approximately 1 yard of ½"-wide silicone-backed elastic
- Thread to match

DRAFT IT

1 **TRACE FRONT AND BACK SLOPERS** for the princess dress (strapless seamline) onto pattern paper, including grainline and notches.

2 **FRONT AND BACK SEPARATE FACINGS:** Tape together the front slopers at the connecting neckline seams. Draft a 2"-wide facing around the front neckline from center front to side seam (see page 54). Repeat for the back facings.

3 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front dress and facing). Add 1" to the bottom edge of the dress patterns for the hem allowance. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

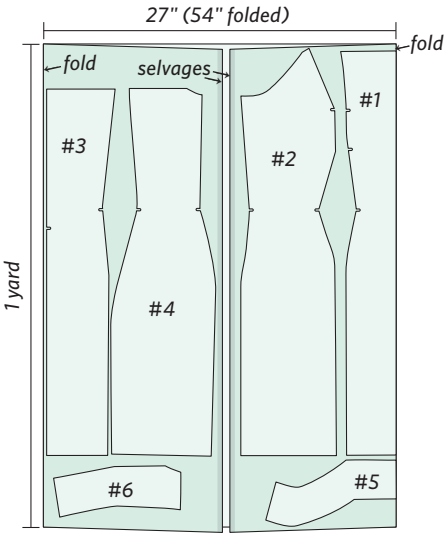
4 **MEASURE, LABEL, AND CUT:** Measure all matching seams to be sure your pattern pieces line up correctly, and make adjustments as needed. When you're satisfied that everything is in order, label the pattern pieces and cut them out around the added seam allowance (see page 56). Refer to the cutting ticket below for numbering the pattern pieces.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric (see page 61).

CUTTING TICKET: *Enchanted Evening*

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC			
#1	Front Center Dress	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Dress	2	
#3	Back Center Dress	2	
#4	Back Side Dress	2	
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold
#6	Back Facing	2	
INTERFACING			
#5	Front Facing	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#6	Back Facing	2	¼" smaller than fabric



CUTTING LAYOUT

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding facing pieces and prepare the facings (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the seam allowances (see page 187) before joining the pieces. Or, if you prefer, clean-finish as you stitch each seam or at the end of the project before you hem.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and facing pieces (see page 180).

4 **FRONT DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch one front side piece to each side of the front center dress. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

5 **BACK DRESS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

6 **SIDE SEAMS:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front dress and back dress pieces together at the side seams. Clip the curved seam allowances and press.

7 **INSERT THE ZIPPER** in the center back, following the instructions for an invisible zipper (see page 194).

8 **NECK FACING:** Prepare and attach the facing as instructed on pages 184–186.

9 **HAND-SEW** the silcone elastic near the top edge of the dress (from center back to center back) with invisible slipstitches, so the stitching doesn't show on the right side. The elastic should help hold the dress up.

10 **HEM THE DRESS:** Make a 1" double-fold hem on the bottom of the dress (see page 188).

OWN IT

Flower Power

Who doesn't love flowers? I think flowers make every girl happy — they are a universal smile. For this design, I go literal with my embellishments and add flowers to the neckline. You can use this technique on all of your dresses, not just the dresses in this book.

You'll need ½ yard of contrasting or matching fabric to make the flowers. If you are going to use silk or other lightweight fabric, I suggest stiffening the fabric with fusible interfacing, then doubling the fabric so the interfacing doesn't show. Taffeta is a great fabric to use, because it already has great texture. For a more casual look, try denim.

- Draw a flower shape on cardstock and cut it out.
- Place the template on your fabric and trace around it with tailor's chalk. This dress features four flowers, each with two layers, which means tracing the template eight times.
- Cut out the fabric flowers and lay them on your dress, stacking one on top of another, and turning the layers to stagger the petals.
- Pin in place and hand-sew to the dress, using a simple X stitch in the center of the flower.

ROCK IT

Belle of the Ball

Whenever I find myself invited to a super-formal event, I struggle to find something appropriate. Everything I have is either too old or doesn't fit. Getting ready is usually quite the performance! Being someone who likes to dress quite flamboyantly, I sometimes need to tone it down, which can be really tough for me! If the idea of a formfitting dress is just not appealing, try this circle skirt variation.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your princess seam slopers (see chapter 2)
- Fabric 1 (dress), 2 yards of 54" satin
- Fabric 2 (lining), 2 yards of 54" satin
- ¼ yard of fusible interfacing
- 12" invisible zipper
- 1 yard of 1"-wide satin ribbon to match the lining
- Approximately 1 yard of ½"-wide silicone-backed elastic
- Thread to match

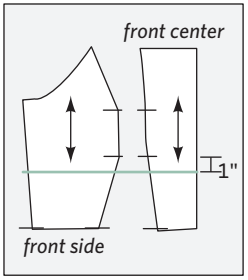
Fabric Tip

Poly-blend satin is cheaper and easier to use than silk satin. The quality is obviously not as good, but I happily use it for many of my projects.

DRAFT IT

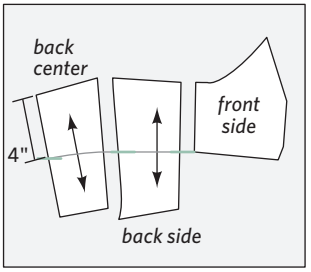
1 **TRACE THE FRONT SLOPERS** for the princess dress, *only to the waistline*, onto pattern paper, including grainline and notches. Trace the strapless sleeve seamline on the front slopers. Make the following design adjustments:

- Draw the empire waistline: On both front pattern pieces, draw a horizontal line 1" below the first notch below the apex notch and perpendicular to the center front.
- Trace the two new front bodice pieces onto separate pattern paper, including grainlines and notches, and label them.



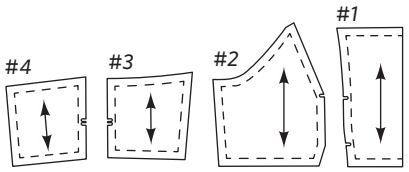
2 **TRACE THE BACK SLOPERS** for the princess dress, *only to the waistline*, onto pattern paper, including grainline and notches. Trace the strapless sleeve design line on the back side sloper. Make the following design adjustments.

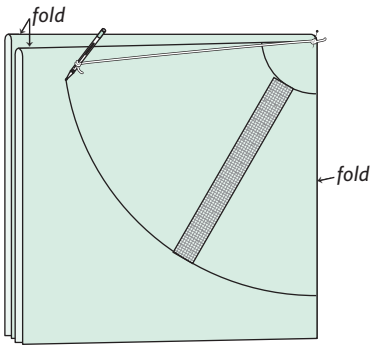
- Draw the empire waistline: Mark the location of the new empire waistline on the side back side seam.
- Measure and make a mark 4" down the center back from the neckline. Draw a slightly curved design line for the empire waist from the side seam to the center back.
- Trace the two back bodice pieces onto separate pattern paper, including grainlines and notches, and label them.



3 **ADD** ½" seam allowances to all edges of the patterns, except for those cut on the fabric fold (center front). Be sure to add seam allowance to the bottom edges of the bodice and side bodices. Make sure any matching notches are clearly marked.

4 **CUT OUT THE PATTERN PIECES:** When you're satisfied that everything is in order, cut out the pattern pieces. Refer to the cutting ticket on page 167 for numbering the pattern pieces.





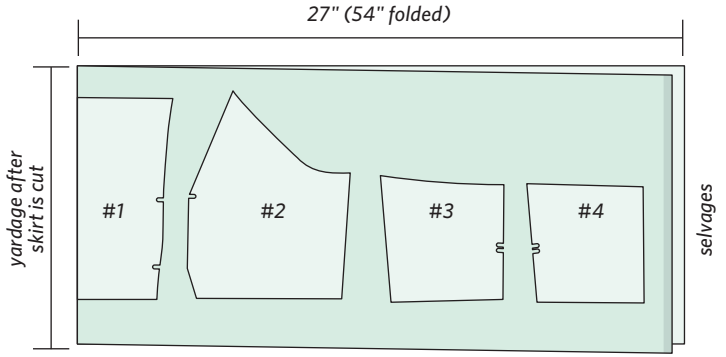
5 DRAFT THE CIRCLE SKIRT directly on the fabric as for the *Sweetheart Sundress* on page 153. Follow steps 1 through 3 of Draft and Cut Out the Square Skirt (see page 155) to make two large squares with a waistline cutout, one for the main fabric and one for the lining. Before unfolding these cutouts, do the following:

- Decide on the length of the skirt. The lining fabric needs to be 2" longer than the main fabric, so you could make the lining the full length of the square, with the dress 2" shorter than that.
- One way to proceed: you can use a long ruler or yardstick to measure from waistline to hemline at a few points, mark the hem at a few points with chalk, then connect the lines in an arc. Do this on both fabrics.
- The other option is to measure and prepare a long piece of string as you did for the waist, put a pin at the fold, and draw the hemline arc with chalk on both skirts.
- Cut both fabrics on the chalk line.

4 OPEN THE FABRIC: You will have a big circle with a smaller circle in the middle. Draw the center back seam with a ruler and chalk, from the waist opening down to the cut edge. Add a placement mark for the end of the zipper 10" down from the top edge of the cut line.

CUT IT OUT

Arrange and cut out your pattern pieces from fabric, according to the layout diagram and cutting ticket. Transfer all pattern markings to the fabric. The main skirt and lining fabrics have already been cut into the circle skirt pieces.



BODICE CUTTING LAYOUT
(same for both fabrics)

CUTTING TICKET: Belle of the Ball

PIECE #	PATTERN PIECE	# TO CUT	CUTTING INFORMATION
FABRIC 1			
#1	Front Center Bodice	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Bodice	2	
#3	Back Side Bodice	2	
#4	Back Center Bodice	2	
FABRIC 2			
#1	Front Center Bodice	1	cut on fold
#2	Front Side Bodice	2	
#3	Back Center Bodice	2	
#4	Back Side Bodice	2	
INTERFACING			
#1	Front Center Bodice	1	cut on fold, ¼" smaller than fabric
#2	Front Side Bodice	2	cut ¼" smaller than fabric
#3	Back Center Bodice	2	cut ¼" smaller than fabric
#4	Back Side Bodice	2	cut ¼" smaller than fabric

RIBBON

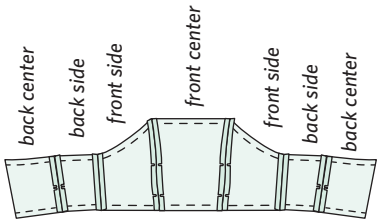
Cut 1 length of ribbon to waist circumference plus ½" seam allowance at both ends.

SEW IT

1 **INTERFACING:** Press fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the corresponding bodice lining pieces (see page 184).

2 **CLEAN-FINISH** the edges of the skirt pieces with a zigzag or overlock stitch (see page 188) as you stitch the seams. Since the bodice is fully lined, it doesn't need finishing. Although the skirt also has a lining, it is not contained like the bodice, and satin is more likely to fray than cotton.

3 **STAYSTITCH** the curved edges of the neckline and waistline pieces (see page 180).



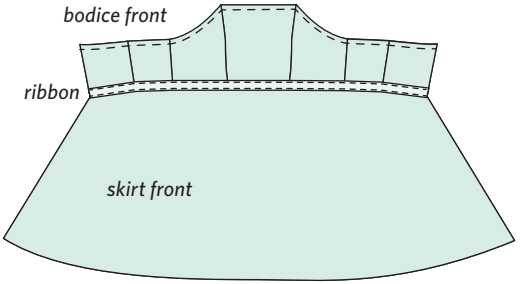
BODICE, WRONG SIDE

4 **ASSEMBLE THE BODICE:**

- With the right sides together, pin and stitch one front side piece to each side of the front center bodice.
- With the right sides together, pin and stitch each back center piece to the corresponding back side piece (the center back is not stitched because of the zipper opening).
- With the right sides together, pin and stitch the front to the back at the side seams.
- Clip the curved seam allowances and press. Repeat with all the lining pieces.

5 **HAND-SEW** the silicone elastic near the top edge of the dress (from center back to center back) with invisible slipstitches, so the stitching doesn't show on the right side. The elastic should help hold the dress up.

6 **ATTACH THE SKIRT TO THE BODICE:** With the right sides together, pin and stitch the skirt to the bottom edge of the bodice, leaving the center back open. Repeat with the skirt lining and bodice lining. Clip the curved seam allowances and press. See the Designer Tip for Pinning the Skirt to the Bodice on page 156.



7 **ATTACH THE WAISTBAND RIBBON:** Position and pin the bottom of the ribbon just over the waistline seam from center back to center back around the entire dress. Stitch the ribbon to the dress close to each edge of the ribbon. Trim the ribbon so the ends are flush with the back of the dress.

8 **INSTALL THE INVISIBLE ZIPPER** in the back of the dress, following instructions on page 193. Treat the ribbon as part of the fabric and include it in the zipper seam.

9 **ATTACH THE LINING:** see *Peep Show* on page 130, step 6.

10 **HEM THE DRESS** and the lining separately, each with 1" double-fold hem (see page 188). Press.

CHAPTER 6

VINTAGE TRANSFORMATION

This chapter is dedicated to my love of upcycling. Using the skills and slopers from previous chapters, I will show you some great ideas that take thrift-store shopping to a whole new level! You don't have to spend a lot of money to rework your finds either. See how easy it is to transform an oversized vintage dress using your shift slopers. And if you thought there was only one way to wear a pair of jeans, then think again!

REMAKE IT

Shape Shifter

You know how it is when you find a dress with a great print in a thrift store, but it is the wrong size, or shapeless, and you have no idea how to change it. If something is too big, this project will teach you how to do something about that! Fortunately, you can pretty much recut oversized dresses as though they were fabric. If the dress is large enough, you'll be able to cut out the front, back, and facing pieces from it. Use your shift sloper to create something new from something old. Have fun trawling through secondhand stores and vintage shops for an oversized shift dress in an awesome fabric.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Pattern pieces for Shift and Shout (see page 66) or your shift slopers (see chapter 2)
- Oversized vintage dress
- Thread to match

DO IT

1 **TRACE SHIFT AND SHOUT:** Use the *Shift and Shout* pattern pieces for the front dress, back dress, and neckline facing (not the sleeve) or combination facing, if you have enough fabric. Draft an armhole facing (see page 55). If you didn't make the Shift and Shout dress, refer to the patternmaking instructions for that dress, eliminating the sleeves and drafting an armhole facing instead.

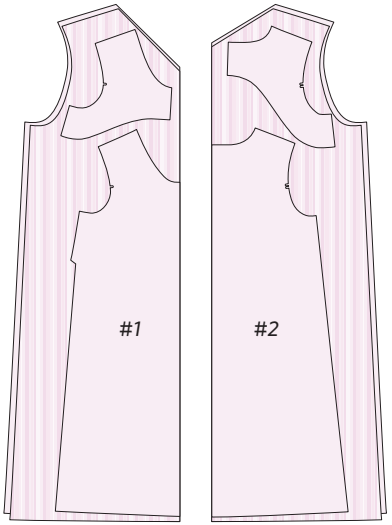
2 **TAKE APART THE DRESS:** This is no time for being sentimental! Take that seam ripper and remove the stitches at the side seams and around the sleeves. Remove the sleeves from the dress. You will now have a front and back dress. Treat these two pieces as fabric.

3 **PREP THE FABRIC:** Iron the front and back dress. Get the fabric on grain, just as you do with fabric (see page 10). Lay the pieces out on a flat work surface and fold them in half, matching up sides and shoulders as best you can.

4 **LAY OUT THE PATTERNS:** Position your pattern pieces with the center front and back of the dresses and facings on the fabric fold. Fit the armhole facings around the dress pieces. If you don't have enough fabric, you can cut the facings from a different fabric or use bias tape (see page 180) to finish the armholes and neckline.

5 **CUT OUT THE FABRIC** and cut interfacing for each facing piece, ¼" smaller than the pattern pieces.

6 **MACHINE-STITCH** the new dress pieces together (see page 180). To attach the armhole facings, see page 184. Press. Now you have your own home-grown original vintage shift — and it fits!



REMAKE IT

Vintage Men's Shirt

There is something comforting about being in a man's shirt, whether it's your father's or your boyfriend's. They are comfortable and you feel safe in a man's shirt, right? But how awesome would it be to find one that was, well, a little more flattering. Why not take a man's shirt and make it fit? You have all the information you need to be able to do this! You learned how to create your perfect-fitted sheath sloper in chapter 4 and you know how darts work to add dimension to flat fabric. Use the sheath patterns to help you shape a shapeless shirt into a fabulous dress. Since the shirt might be quite short, team it with a pair of leggings or funky tights. You can even wear it over another dress, as seen here, as an accessory.

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Your customized sheath slopers (see chapter 2)
- Vintage men's shirt
- Fabric tracing paper and tracing wheel
- Thread to match

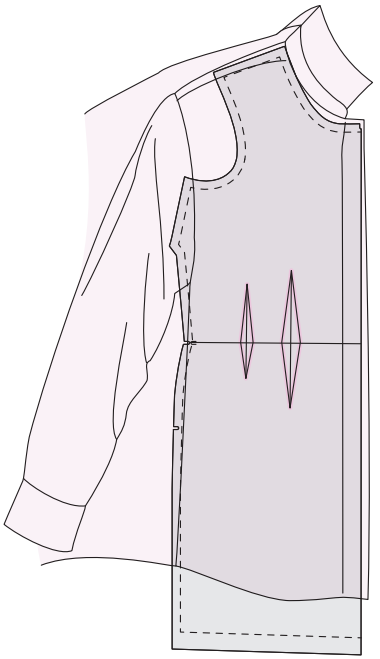
DO IT

1 **PREP THE SHIRT:** Turn the shirt wrong side out, press it, and lay it out on a flat work surface.

2 **TRACE DARTS ON THE FRONT:** Beginning with the front, line up the center front of your sloper with the center front of the shirt (the center of the buttonhole placket). Use tailor's chalk to trace the waist darts onto the wrong side of the fabric. Flip the sloper and trace the darts on the other side of the front. If the shirt is super large, you might want to take in the side seams as well. If you only want a bit more shape, the darts might be enough without changing the side seam. It is up to you, designer!

3 **TRACE DARTS ON THE BACK:** Fold the back of the shirt in half and trace the back darts just as for the front. If you took in the side seams on the front, take them in on the back as well.

4 **STITCH THE DARTS:** Pin and stitch both the front and back darts. If you decided to take in the side seams, pin and stitch the front and back shirt with right sides together. Dads and boyfriends better keep a close eye on their shirts from now on!



REMAKE IT

Blue Jeans to Princess Dreams

Who doesn't love denim? Timeless and versatile, denim is a wardrobe staple across the country and worldwide. I can't wear jeans for some bizarre reason. Unlike the rest of the population, I find them really uncomfortable! I am a dress girl! Jeans do look great, though, so how do I wear mine? As a dress!

NEED IT

- Sewing Essentials (page 22)
- Strapless princess seam slopers from *Enchanted Evening* dress (page 160)
- 2 pairs of vintage jeans, the bigger the better
- ½" yard of leftover printed scrap fabric (optional)
- ½ yard of interfacing (optional)
- 18" exposed zipper
- Thread to match

DO IT

1 **DISMANTLE THE JEANS:** Take the jeans apart by cutting up the inseam and center front (to the zipper) and up the back of the jeans (no need to cut the side seams). Open up the jeans and lay them out flat.

2 **GATHER AND LAY OUT THE PATTERN PIECES:** Gather the patterns you made for the *Enchanted Evening* dress (page 160). Keeping the grainline in mind, position each pattern piece on a side/leg panel and trace around it with tailor's chalk. Make sure you mark all the notches.

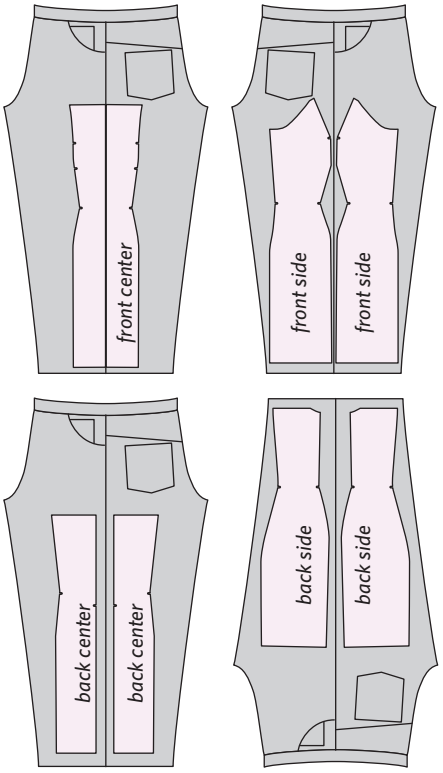
- For the front dress, which is usually cut on the fold, position the center front of the pattern on the side seam of the jeans. Trace it and then flip it and trace the mirror image on the other side of the seam. Or you can cut two front pieces and add a center front seam; just remember to add ½" seam allowance to the center edge.
- Facings cut from denim would make the dress too bulky, so use leftover lightweight fabric for those. A cute cotton print would add a fun surprise inside your dress.

OPTION: *Since most denim is sturdy enough to hold up without a facing, you can skip it altogether and make a 1" double-fold hem on the top edge of the dress. For this option, add ½" to the top edge before cutting out the dress pieces.*

3 **CUT OUT** the fabric on the tracings. Cut interfacing for the facings, ¼" smaller than the facing patterns.

4 **SEW TOGETHER THE DRESS,** following instructions on page 162.

OPTION: *If you want to be bold, go with a colorful, exposed back zipper. We don't cover instructions for that in this book, but tutorials can be found online.*



LAYING OUT THE PATTERN PIECES ON TWO PAIRS OF JEANS

ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY

Basic Hand Stitches . . . . . page 179
Basic Machine Stitches . . . . . page 180
Bias Binding . . . . . page 180

Buttons and Buttonholes . . . . . page 182
Darts . . . . . page 183
Facings . . . . . page 184
Finishing Raw Edges . . . . . page 187

Making a Hem . . . . . page 188
Sleeves . . . . . page 189
Straps . . . . . page 192
Zippers . . . . . page 193

Basic Hand Stitches

Appliqué (Fell) Stitch

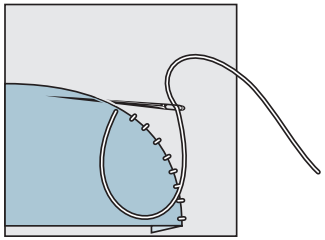
Also called the fell stitch, this stitch is best for joining appliqué to a dress (see *Outdoorsy Appliqué* on page 119). If the appliqué fabric ravels, fold the edge ⅛" to the wrong side and stitch through the fabric fold. With the appliqué placed on the dress:

1 **AT THE EDGE OF THE APPLIQUÉ,** push the needle in from the back of the dress and up through all the layers.

2 **TURN** the needle and sew back down through the dress fabric, right below where it came out of the appliqué fabric.

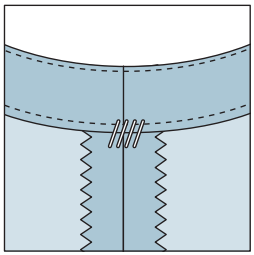
3 **BRING THE NEEDLE BACK UP** through the appliqué, about ⅛" from the first stitch.

3 **CONTINUE** to work these small stitches to secure the appliqué.



Hand-Tack

Use this technique for holding facings in place on necklines and armholes. Simply take a couple of closely placed straight stitches in the seam allowance, as shown, so the stitches are invisible from the right side.



Slipstitch

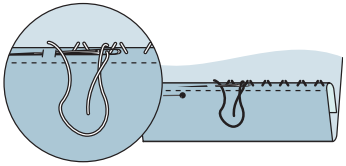
Also known as a blind stitch, the slipstitch is used to join two folded edges or to attach a folded edge to flat fabric as for a hem.

1 **TIE** a knot at one end of your thread. Slip the needle into the fold of the fabric for about ⅜".

2 **TAKE** a tiny stitch across from where the needle is located, picking up only a single thread on the opposite layer, and pull the needle through.

3 **SLIP** the needle back through the fold again for about ⅜" and then make the next stitch. Continue alternating between the bottom and top layers.

4 **SECURE** the thread with a couple of extra stitches and tie a knot.

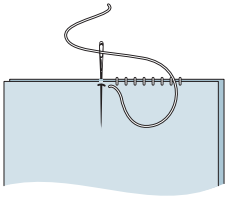


Whipstitch

The whipstitch is another good way to close seams. It can also be used to overcast raw edges.

1 **TIE** a knot in the end of your thread. Insert the needle inside the fold from the wrong side and bring it to the front about ⅛" from the edge.

2 **BRING** the needle around to the back, wrapping the thread over the fabric edge(s). Insert the needle from the back through to the front about ⅛" away from the first stitch and ⅛" from the fabric edge(s). Pull the thread to secure it.



Basic Machine Stitches

I'm going to assume you know how to make a backstitch, basting stitch, and zigzag stitch. Check your owner's manual if you're not sure. Here's a quick review of other stitches frequently used when making dresses.

Staystitch

This stitch is done through one layer of fabric before sewing a seam to keep an area from stretching during the sewing process. It's particularly helpful at the neckline and armhole, especially when using delicate, stretchy, or slippery fabrics. To staystitch a curved seam, sew a regular length stitch about ⅛" from the seamline, within the seam allowance, so it will be invisible (hidden in the seam allowance) in the finished garment. For necklines, stitch from the shoulder seam to the neckline center. For armholes, stitch from the shoulder to the side seam.

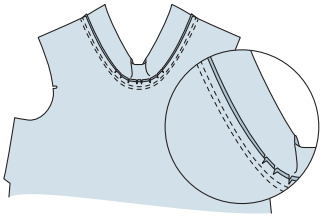
Topstitch

A topstitch, done on the right side of the fabric, is used to hold a facing in place (for instance, around the neckline and armholes). Topstitching also gives a nice clean-finish to a garment, and can be done in a contrasting thread color for a decorative touch.

Understitch

Understitching is often used to help facing pieces roll to the wrong side and stay inside the garment, much like topstitching. But rather than showing, the stitch is made onto the facing pieces. On a neckline facing, for example, you would do the following after attaching the facing.

1. **CLIP** into the curves of the seam allowances and press them toward the facing.
2. **MACHINE-STITCH** through the seam allowances and facing, as close to the seamline as possible, before turning the facing to the inside.
3. **HAND-TACK** (see page 179) the facing in place at the shoulder seams. Stitch within the seam allowances of the shoulder seams so the stitches don't show on the right side of the dress.



Bias Binding

Bias tape (also called bias binding), prepackaged or custom-made, is often used to finish or "bind" a raw edge or seam, particularly necklines, armholes, and hems. You can use single- or double-fold binding; it's just a matter of personal preference.

Prepackaged Bias Tape

If the tape is hidden on the inside of the dress (as a casing or an edge finish), a quick solution is to buy ready-made bias tape. Many colors and widths are available in fabric stores, already folded and pressed, making it easy to attach it to your seams. I suggest using either ½" single-fold bias tape or ¼" double-fold bias tape; they both have prefolded edges.

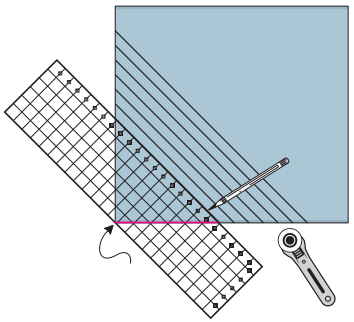
- **SINGLE-FOLD BIAS TAPE** Both long raw edges of the bias tape are folded and pressed ¼" toward the wrong side and meet in the middle. Single-fold bias tape is often used as a trim, to hem and bind quilts, and as a bias facing.
- **DOUBLE-FOLD BIAS TAPE** This starts as single-fold bias tape and is then pressed in half again, only slightly off center so it is easier to apply. The wider side should be placed on the underside of the garment, so the topstitching catches it.

Custom-Made Bias Tape

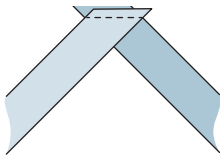
You can cut your own bias tape in any number of fabrics. Although this requires more time, it really does add a personal touch to use a fun hand-made bias tape. If you're using the tape on the outside of the dress as a decorative accent — say, for trim on pockets — it could be worth the effort to get the right color or print to set off your dress fabric.

To make ½" single-fold bias tape or ¼" double-fold bias tape, follow the same procedure.

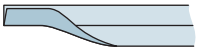
1 **CUT** 1"-wide bias tape strips to the desired length. Bias strips are cut at a 45-degree angle across the fabric.



2 **PIECE** several strips together, if necessary, to achieve the desired length. Stitch two short ends together as shown and press the seam open.

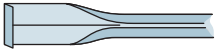


3 **FOLD** the bias strip in half and press, then open up the tape again and lay it flat.



NOTE: *Here's a secret designer tip! As you press the strip, spray it with spray starch and allow the steam to set the starch.*

4 **PRESS** under both long sides of the strip toward the center fold. Use the spray starch again to make sure the tape is set and strong. As you work, you will press out the center fold, making this ½" single-fold bias tape.



5 **REFOLD AND PRESS** the tape down the center for ¼" double-fold bias tape.

Attaching Bias Tape

Whether you use single-fold or double-fold bias tape, attach the binding to the raw edge of a dress neckline, armhole, or hem as follows.

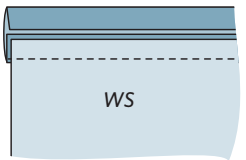
1 **UNFOLD** one narrow pressed edge of the bias tape. (If using store-bought double-fold bias tape, look for the side that is slightly narrower than the other and unfold that edge.)

2 **PRESS UNDER** one short end ½", if you will be sewing the tape to a circular opening (neckline or armhole).

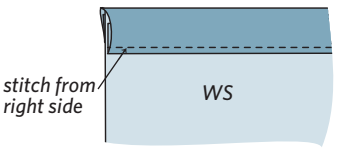
3 **PIN THE TAPE** to the garment edge, starting with the folded short end, right sides together and aligning raw edges. Stitch the tape to the dress along the bias tape ¼" fold. If stitching a circular opening, simply overlap the end of the bias tape at the beginning and complete the seam.

4 **PRESS** the tape up over the seam allowance and to the wrong side. Pin in place. (With store-bought double-fold tape, the wider side of the tape in back will bring the edge of the tape lower than the seam on the right side of the garment.)

5 **TOPSTITCH** from the front of the dress to catch the tape in the back. With store-bought double-fold tape, you can stitch-in-the-ditch (just below the seam) and catch the bottom fold in the back, which makes the seam nearly invisible. Another way to hide stitching is to hand-sew the back edge of the bias tape.



STITCH-IN-THE DITCH



In the lower illustration, stitching below the tape on the right side has caught the bottom edge of the tape on the wrong side.

Buttons and Buttonholes

You can add color and impact to your dresses just by picking a great button. And, buttonholes are a cinch if you simply follow your sewing machine manual.

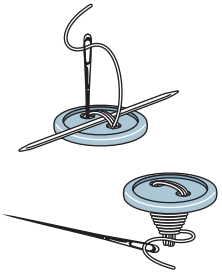
Securing your buttons correctly the first time can save a lot of time later replacing buttons. For a little extra security, try using heavyweight thread designed for buttons. But if you only have regular weight thread, use two threads in the needle; you will have four threads running through your button at one time. This way you'll only have to go through the button a couple of times. Knot all threads together at the end.

Attaching Sew-Through Buttons

Sew-through buttons are flat with two or more holes for the thread to run through.

1 **START** on the wrong side of the fabric beneath the button. Run the thread up through the fabric and through one buttonhole. For beginners I suggest this little trick to keep the button from being too tight against the dress: place a toothpick (or needle or matchstick) across the button and take several stitches through the button and fabric layers over the toothpick. (If your button has four holes, stitch diagonally across the button, then back in the other direction to create an X.)

2 **REMOVE THE TOOTHPICK** and pull the button away from the fabric a bit. Wrap the thread a few times around the stitches below the button. Then, secure the end of the thread with a few backstitches on the wrong side of the garment.



Attaching Shank Buttons

Shank buttons have a small loop at the back and no holes on the front of the button.

1 **BEGIN BY** sewing a couple of stitches on the right side of the fabric at the button location.

2 **WORK** several stitches through the shank of the button and then the garment. Bring the needle and thread to the right side and wrap the thread below the shank and around the thread stitches a few times. If the fabric is heavy and you want a longer shank, slip a toothpick between the first stitch and the fabric before you start wrapping the thread around the stitches.

3 **BRING** the needle to the wrong side and backstitch a few times. Knot the thread and cut the ends close to the button.

Darts

Bust Darts

Darts are used to create shape in the fabric so the garment conforms to the shape of the body at the bust, waist, hips, and sometimes even the elbow.

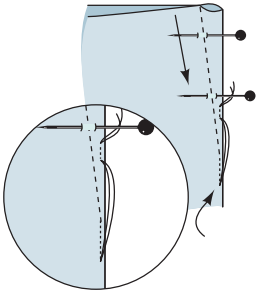
1 **TRANSFER** the dart stitchlines to the wrong side of the fabric.

2 **FOLD THE DART** in half with the right sides and stitchlines together. Insert pins perpendicular to the dart so they can easily be removed as you are stitching.

3 **STITCH** the dart, starting from the wide outer edge and sewing toward the point. Begin with a regular size stitch and backstitch to start. Reduce the length of your stitch about halfway down the dart and finish with a small stitch (1.5 mm or 1 or 2 sizes down on your machine, depending on your machine options).

4 **KEEP STITCHING** off the edge of the fabric, to create a tight chain that will secure the end of the dart. Do not backstitch at the point, because you don't want thickness at the end of the dart; you want it to lie flat and be inconspicuous.

5 **PRESS** the dart downward (toward the hem) on a dressmaker's ham, if you have one.



Waist Darts

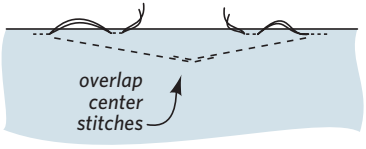
Waistline darts are used in most of the sheath dresses to add shape and waistline definition to the silhouettes.

1 **DRAW** a line, with tailor's chalk and a straight ruler, to connect the dart points through the center of the dart.

2 **FOLD** the dart along the center marking with the right sides of the fabric together. Insert the pins perpendicular to the fold of the dart so they can easily be removed as you are stitching.

3 **STITCH** from the center out toward each point. Overlap the stitches at the center by about ½". Decrease the stitch length as you near each edge and keep stitching off the edges of the fabric (see Bust Darts, at left).

4 **PRESS** the darts toward the center of the garment. In some instances, it is easier to press a dart if you clip into the center to release the fabric so it lies flat.



Facings

Chapter 2 explains the importance of facings and how to draft them (see page 54). I use three different kinds of facings (separate, combination, and bias) to the finish neckline and armhole edges and center front openings of many of the dresses in this book. It is a good idea to prep shaped and combination facing pieces before you start sewing your garment. Bias facings are not drafted. Attach bias tape as described on page 180 and 181.

Preparing Shaped and Combination Facings

1 **STAYSTICH** the curved neckline and armhole edges of the facings the same as for the corresponding dress pieces (see page 180). If the fabric doesn't stretch, you can skip this step.

2 **ATTACH** interfacing to the facings. To adhere fusible interfacing correctly, follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not move the iron back and forth; instead, lift it up and down and use a little steam to warm and seal the adhesive. If you are using sew-in interfacing, sew it to the facings (see page 22).

3 **FINISH** the outside edge of the facings (opposite the staystitching), either with a zigzag stitch or by trimming the edge with pinking shears (see page 28).

Sewing Shaped Facings

Shaped neckline and armhole facing pieces can either be made separately or can be combined as one piece. Here are instructions for sewing both.

SEPARATE FACINGS: This technique is best for beginners. Separate facings for armholes and necklines are easy to make and easy to sew into the garment. All you need is fusible interfacing and the facing pieces. These instructions are for armhole and neckline facings that are applied to the dress as one continuous piece without a center front or back opening.

1 **STITCH** the prepared facing pieces (front and back) with the right sides together.

2 **TRIM** the seam allowances to reduce bulk.

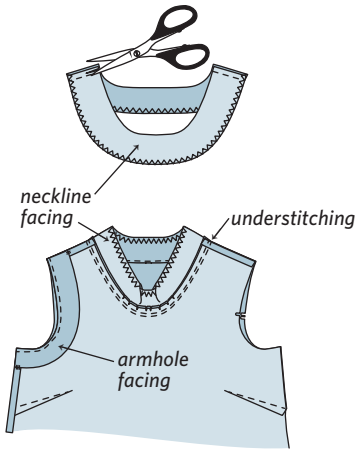
3 **ATTACH** the facing. With the right sides together, pin the facing to the garment, matching up the facing seams with the dress seams. Stitch the facing to the dress.

4 **TRIM** the seam allowance to about ⅛", or if the fabric frays easily, only trim it to ¼".

5 **CLIP** into the curve of the seam allowances so the seams will press flat; use a tailor's ham if you have one.

6 **PRESS** the seam allowance toward the facing and understitch (see page 180).

7 **HAND-TACK** the facing to the garment within the seam allowances at the shoulder seams and side seams. Topstitch (see page 180) if desired.

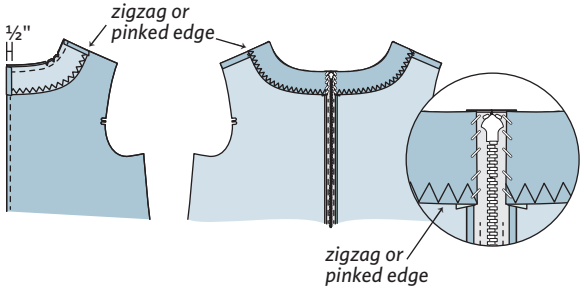


This illustration shows the attached neckline facing before it is turned to the inside of the dress.

SEPARATE NECKLINE FACING WITH CENTER BACK (OR FRONT) OPENING: Several of the dresses, especially those that are fitted, have a center back zipper. This means that the back facing needs a center back opening as well. When you drafted this facing, you will have added seam allowance to the center back edges, since the pattern piece is not cut on the fabric fold. Use this same method for a center front opening.

You attach this type of facing the same way as the above facing, with just a few differences.

- When you prepare the facings, press under the short ends at the center back (or front) by ½", then open them back up again. Stitch the facing pieces together at the shoulder seams as before and trim the seam allowance.
- When you pin the facing to the dress (step 3), the short ends of the facing will extend beyond the zipper by ½" with the pressed fold lining up with the edge of the opening.
- After stitching, trimming the seam allowance, clipping curves, pressing, and understitching, press the facing to the wrong side of the dress. Slipstitch the pressed edges of the facings to the zipper tape (clear of the zipper teeth).



FACING FACTS

- Once you have sewn the facing to the dress, trim the seam allowance to minimize bulk. Depending on the quality of the fabric, you can trim the seam allowance to ⅛" if the fabric doesn't fray.
- If the dress is made of heavyweight fabric, use a lighter-weight fabric for the facings.
- Clip into the curved facing seam allowances so they are easier to press.
- Finish the outer edge of the facings so they don't fray (see oposite page).
- Understitch (see page 180) the facing to prevent it from rolling toward the right side of the garment.
- Hand-tack (see page 179) the facing to the garment within the seam allowances so the stitches are not visible from the right side of the dress.
- Once the facing is secured, topstitch close to the finished edge for a neat and clean-finishing touch. This is optional.

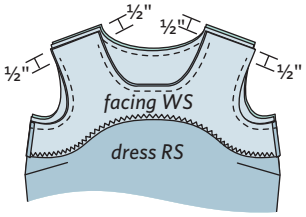
COMBINATION FACING: For this method, the neckline and armhole facing pieces are one piece. Combination facings can be tricky to insert, so they are not the best choice for beginners. For drafting instructions, see page 55.

1 **PREPARE** the facings (see page 184).

2 **STITCH** only the side seams with the right sides together. Press.

3 **PIN** the facing to the dress with right sides together, aligning side seams and matching up notches.

IMPORTANT: *The shoulder seams for both the dress and the facings should be unstitched, or you will be unable to turn the facing to the wrong side of the dress. Stitch the facing to the dress around the neckline and armhole, stopping ½" short of the edge at each shoulder seam.*

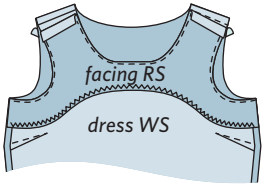


4 **TRIM** the seam allowance around the neckline and armholes to about ⅛", or if the fabric frays easily, only trim it to ¼".

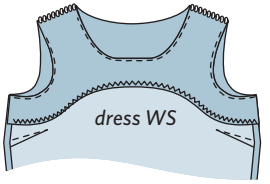
5 **CLIP** into the curve of the seam allowances so the seams will press flat. Press.

6 **UNDERSTITCH** the seam allowance in the areas as far as your machine can reach.

7 **TURN** the facing to the inside of the garment so the wrong sides are together and the shoulder seams are still open. Press the neckline and the armholes.



8 **CLOSE** the dress shoulder seams. This is where it can get a little tricky, so hold tight! Once you have this mastered you'll be a pro! Fold the facing shoulder seams down and machine-stitch just the dress shoulder seams with the right sides together (from the wrong side of the dress). Press the dress seam allowances open.



9 **TURN** the facing shoulder seam allowances ½" to the wrong side, and slipstitch (see page 179) the folded edges together to close the inside shoulder seam.

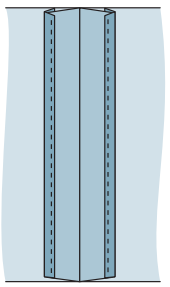
10 **HAND-TACK** (see page 179) the facing to the dress at the side seams. Press. Topstitch (see page 180) if desired.

Finishing Raw Edges

It is important to finish the raw edges on the inside of your dress if you want it to last. Take a look on the inside of a store-bought dress to check out the seams. Some may be finished with something called an overlock stitch, described below, which is quick and tidy and great for simple woven dress projects. The finishes that follow are identified as basic or advanced. Basic finishes are good for simple dresses made of woven fabrics. Use a more advanced finish if you want your garment to be totally gorgeous on the inside as well as the outside.

Bias Binding (Intermediate)

Bias binding is a simple and effective way to finish your seams and hems, and it can add a quick pop of color. It's especially good for curved seams, such as necklines and armholes. The goal is to cover the edges of the seam allowance with bias tape on the inside of the dress. I consider bias tape to be the easier, decorative version of the French seam. You can apply single- or double-fold bias binding to the edges of the seam allowances. If you use single-fold bias tape, press it in half and attach it like double-fold bias tape (see page 180).

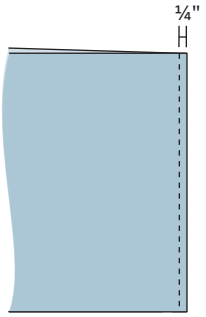


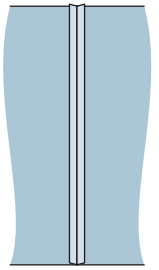
French Seams (Advanced)

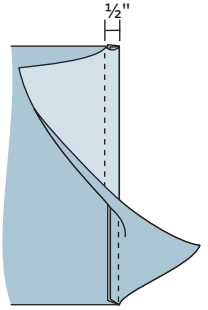
I love the finish of a French seam, and tend to use it on delicate fabrics where a zigzag stitch won't do. With a French seam, the raw edges of the fabric are enclosed within the seam. This creates a clean and professional finish. This is rather time-consuming for your everyday dresses. It tends to be more appropriate for evening dresses or a really special dress for a friend.

NOTE: *A French seam requires a larger seam allowance. Throughout the book, we use a ½" seam allowance, but with a French seam you need ¾" seam allowances. So add extra seam allowance when making your pattern pieces.*

1. **PIN** your fabrics with the *wrong sides together,* then stitch a ¼" seam. Press.
2. **FOLD** the fabrics so they are now *right sides together.* The ¼" seam allowance will be sandwiched in the fold.
3. **PIN AND STITCH** the seams together for a second time, this time using a ½" seam allowance. This is enough to cover the ¼" seam allowance without any of it being visible.
4. **PRESS** the seams to one side. Beautiful job!

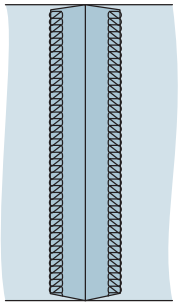






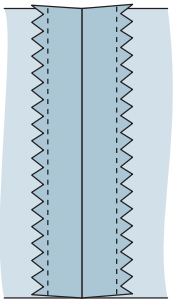
Overlock Stitch (Basic)

Many ready-made dresses are finished with an overlock stitch, which requires a special machine called a serger (see page 25), but not all of us have one of these fancy machines. Several sewing machines offer specialty stitches that replicate the overlock stitch. Refer to your owner's manual to see if your sewing machine offers an overcast or overedge stitch.



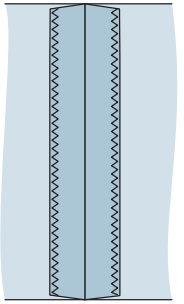
Pinked Edge (Basic)

Pinking shears cut a zigzag edge and make a suitable edge finish on woven, medium-weight fabrics. These scissors are a simple alternative to using a serger. Cut along the raw edge of the fabric (not too close to the seam); the zigzag cut does a good job of keeping the seams from raveling. If you like, run a stitch down the seam allowance about ¼" from the raw edge before cutting.



Zigzag Stitch (Basic)

A zigzag stitch is an easy alternative to the overlock stitch, and you don't need a separate machine. Even the most basic sewing machine is capable of stitching a zigzag stitch. All you need to do is set your machine to the zigzag mode, and sew as close to the edge of the seam allowances as possible to prevent the seams from fraying. Zigzag both seam allowances together or through each seam allowance separately (but do not stitch through the garment).



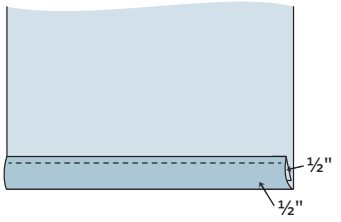
Making a Hem

A standard ½-fold hem is quick and easy to sew, and a suitable hem for all the dresses in this book. This hem requires a 1" hem allowance. If you prefer a wider hem or a hand-sewn hem, simply allow more hem allowance when you draft your dress front and back patterns. Instructions for a double-fold hem follow.

1 **PRESS** the bottom edge of the dress ½" to the wrong side. (If you prefer, pin the edge first, then press.) This is a great time to use a hem gauge for an evenly folded hem (see page 26).

2 **PRESS** another ½" to the wrong side, pinning as needed.

3 **MACHINE-STITCH** ⅛" from the edge of the inside fold, removing the pins as you sew.



Sleeves

I was always afraid of sewing sleeves. The process of sewing together two differently shaped curves and the need to shape the sleeve cap seemed daunting to me! But, we need sleeves, and now that I have experience, I have to say, sewing sleeves is not hard! Just take it one step at a time. The dresses in this book are designed with a set-in or a raglan sleeve, or they can be made sleeveless or even strapless.

Set-in Sleeve

Set-in sleeves can be tricky to attach because you are sewing together two very different curves; the armhole is an inside or concave curve, while the sleeve cap is an outside or convex curve. The notches on the sleeve cap of a regular sleeve pattern will match up with the same notches on the front and back armhole openings, making it much easier to attach the two pieces smoothly. The following notches should be marked on all your sleeve patterns:

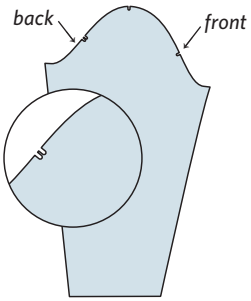
- shoulder seam notch
- front single notch in the middle of the front sleeve cap curve, used for matching and to adjust the sleeve cap ease
- back double notch in the middle of the back sleeve cap curve, used for matching and to adjust the sleeve cap ease

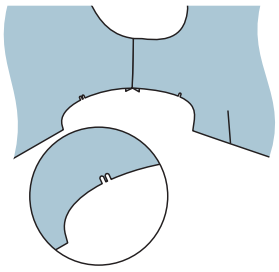
There are two ways to insert a set-in sleeve into an armhole: in the round, or with a flat construction method. I suggest practicing both with scrap muslin to see which feels most comfortable and which gives you the best results.

PREPARING A SET-IN SLEEVE FOR SEWING: The first thing you need to do is prep the sleeves. Sleeves are designed with **ease** added to the sleeve cap for comfort and movement. This means that there is a small amount of extra fabric, between ¾" and 1", drafted into the sleeve cap, so the sleeve cap and armhole opening don't align exactly. You will need to ease the sleeve cap, with very tiny gathers, to make it the same size as the armhole.

1 **FIND THE NOTCHES** on the front and back sleeve cap; they indicate where the ease begins and ends.

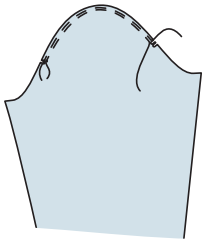
2 **SET YOUR MACHINE** to a basting stitch and sew one row of stitches between the front and back notches, ⅛" from the raw edge.





3 **SEW** another row of stitches between the notches, ¼" from the raw edge.

4 **KNOT** the ends of the threads on one side of the notches. Gently pull the threads on the opposite side to ease and slightly gather the area between the notches. Check the sleeve cap against the armhole notches and stop pulling when they seem to align. Knot the loose ends of the threads and smooth the gathers so the fabric is evenly distributed between the notches. Baste the gathers in place.



Sewing a Set-in Sleeve in the Round

1 **THE FRONT DRESS** should be stitched to the back dress at the shoulder and side seams, with the right sides together, and the seams should be pressed.

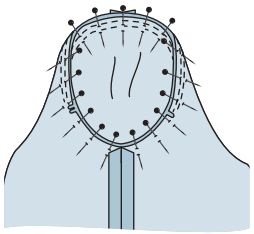
2 **STITCH THE SLEEVE** at the underarm seam, with the right sides together. Press the seam.

3 **WITH THE DRESS WRONG SIDE OUT,** fit the sleeve into the armhole with the right sides together.

4 **MATCH UP** the notches as you pin the layers together. I suggest that you start stitching at the underarm, to keep the beginning and end of the seam tucked out of sight.

5 **STITCH** the seam with the sleeve side down so the machine helps ease the sleeve cap.

6 **CLIP** into the seam allowance at the curves and press the armhole seams. Remove basting stitches.

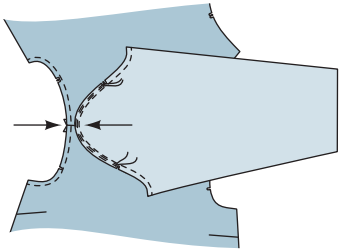


Sewing a Set-in Sleeve with Flat Construction

I find this construction method easier to sew, but this is just a personal preference. Try both methods to see which works best for you. For this method, the shoulder seams of the dress are stitched, but the side seams are not.

1 **THE FRONT DRESS** should be stitched to the back at the shoulder seam only.

2 **PIN** the sleeve to the armhole: Start by matching up the shoulder seam notch on the sleeve with the shoulder seam on the dress. Then carefully pin the sleeve to the dress on both sides of the shoulder seam, matching up the notches and aligning the underarm seam edges.



3 **STITCH** the seam, with the sleeve on the bottom and the dress on top. This makes it easier to manipulate the gathers in the sleeve. When you reach the eased section of the sleeve, slow down and use your fingers to smooth the gathers to avoid puckering. It's possible if you get a few puckers that you will be able to press them smooth.

4 **REMOVE** all basting stitches.

5 **CLIP** into the curves and trim the seam allowance.

6 **PRESS** the seam allowances toward the sleeve.

7 **STITCH** the sleeve underarm seam, from the hem through the underarm, and continue stitching down the side seam in one easy straight line, with the right sides together.

8 **CLIP** into the curves and trim the seam allowance. Press.

NOTE: *If you get puckers in the seam, don't panic. This is an easy problem to fix. Get out your trusty seam ripper, but* **do not** *seam-rip the entire sleeve seam. Just open the seam by a few stitches around the pucker. This will be enough to redistribute the gathers. Then, stitch that section again.*

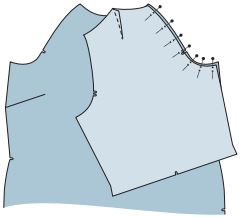
Prepare and Attach Raglan Sleeves

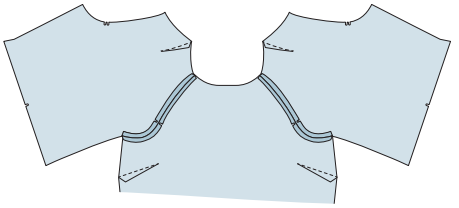
Raglan sleeves are relatively simple to sew in comparison to set-in sleeves. With raglan sleeves, you don't have to worry about fitting a longer seam to a shorter seam, and the curves of the sleeve and the dress are not as dramatically different as those on the set-in sleeve.

1 **PIN AND STITCH** the shoulder dart just as you would a bust dart (see page 183). Press the dart toward the back of the dress on a tailor's ham (if you have one).

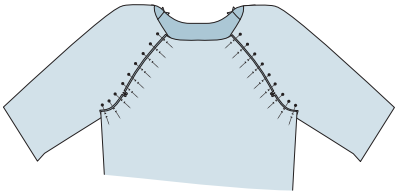
2 **USE YOUR NOTCHES** to match the front of one raglan sleeve to the

correct front dress edge. Pin the two edges with the right sides together, spacing out the pins evenly. If you have cut everything correctly, the sleeve and armhole will be the same length, and they will fit. A little bit of easing along the seam is okay. Repeat to pin the front edge of the other raglan sleeve to the opposite side of the front dress. Stitch the seams, clip the curved seam allowances, and press.





3 PIN AND STITCH the back edge of both sleeves to the back of the dress in the same way as the front sleeves.



4 PIN AND STITCH THE SIDE SEAMS AND UNDERARM SEAMS. With the right sides together, notches matching, and the underarm seams aligned, pin the front and back dress together along one side seam and underarm seam. In one continuous seam and starting at the dress hem, stitch up the side seam, across the underarm/sleeve seam to the bottom of the sleeve. Clip and press the seam. Repeat for the other side.

Straps

Sure, using ribbon is a super-easy and cute way to add straps to a strapless dress. But how about making your own straps? You can use fabric straps for lots of design features, such as shoulder straps, waistband ties, and even straps for a halter top dress that ties at the back (see *Baking Babe* on page 87).

Spaghetti Straps

These narrow straps, ¼" wide and made from 1"-wide bias strips, are often found on sundresses and evening attire.

- **IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, CUT** 1"-wide bias fabric strips to the desired length of the strap (see page 180). If you want the straps to be longer than what you can cut from the fabric, sew the short ends of two strips together on the diagonal (see page 181).
- **FOLD** the strips in half lengthwise, with the wrong sides together. I like to pin the strips and then press them with an iron, removing the pins as I go. Working on the bias means the fabric will slip a little.
- **STITCH** ¼" away from the fold.
- **TRIM** the excess seam allowance close to the stitching.
- **INSERT** a loop turner (see page 28) into the strap. When the hook and latch appear on the other end, poke the latch into the fabric and close the hook to secure.
- **PULL** the loop turner slowly through the tube with one hand, while holding the ring on the other end with the other hand. Pull the fabric right side out up over the tube turner. Do this gently, because the latch sometimes comes undone as you pull. If it does come loose you might be able to rehook it, but you might need to start again. You'll get the hang of it, so hang in there!
- **FINISH UP.** On one end of each of the four straps, take a pencil and poke the ends into the straps for a clean-finish. Hand-sew the ends closed and tie a small knot at the end. The open end will be caught in the dress seam, so it does not need to be finished.

Narrow Straps

These straps are a bit wider than the spaghetti straps, with a finished strap width of ½", and are a little easier to sew.

1. **CUT** two lengths of fabric, each 1½" wide x desired length.
2. **PRESS** both long sides of the straps ¼" to the wrong side.
3. **FOLD** the straps in half and press again. Pin as needed.
4. **MACHINE-STITCH** both long sides of the straps 1/16" from the edge. I like to use contracting thread.

NOTE: *For finished ends, turn under the short edges ¼" to ½" before pressing under the long edges.*

Wider Straps

For a wider, ½"-wide strap, you can use a different method that doesn't require turning the strap right side out:

- **CUT FOUR** 2"-wide bias strips to the desired length.
- **FOLD AND PRESS** the straps as if making double-fold bias tape (see page 181), pressing under the long raw side edges ½" to the wrong side and then in half with the wrong sides together.
- **TOPSTITCH** the straps closed and finish one short edge as for the spaghetti straps.

DESIGNER TIP: *I like to use different color threads for the top spool and bottom bobbin. When topstitching the edges of the strap, I run the strap under the machine one way, and then I flip the strap over to stitch the opposite edge. I am left with contrasting threads on either side of the straps. Cute, right?*

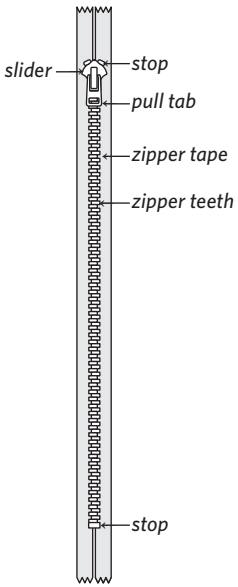
Zippers

There are many different types of zippers and the type you use will depend on the style of the dress and the weight of the fabric. For instance, metal zippers are heavy and best suited for jeans and heavier fabrics. Separating zippers open at the bottom and top and are used in jackets and coats. However, we won't be using any of those in this book. For the most part, dresses, made in medium-weight fabrics, require a nylon coil zipper.

Nylon coil zippers are available as regular zippers and **invisible** zippers. The regular zippers, sometimes called "self-healing," are easy to use and the first choice for most dresses. If the zipper teeth come apart, you simply open and close the zipper to realign the teeth. The teeth of the invisible zipper are behind the zipper tape, so when the zipper is in place, the teeth do not show on the outside of the dress.

There are a number of ways to install zippers, but the dress projects that require a zipper will use either a regular coil zipper or an invisible zipper and a centered application (see page 194). The application method is different for the regular and invisible zippers and you will need different zipper feet. However, regardless of the zipper style, they all have the same basic construction:

- **ZIPPER TAPE** This is the fabric part of the zipper and it is sewn to the garment seam allowance.
- **ZIPPER TEETH** The teeth, in the center of the zipper, are also called coils and they are what opens and closes the zipper.
- **SLIDER** The slider is the metal piece on the zipper that actually zips and unzips the teeth. It has a pull tab on it to make it easier to manipulate.
- **STOPS** Metal stops on the top and bottom of the zipper keep the slider from sliding right off the zipper ends.

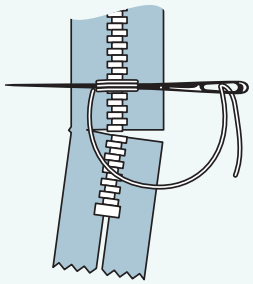


ZIPPER TIP: CUT YOUR ZIPPER TO SIZE

A zipper can be any length you like. If you're looking for a non-standard size, all you need to do is buy a long zipper and cut it to the desired size.

1. **MEASURE AND MARK** the desired length directly on the zipper tape with tailor's chalk.
2. **HAND-SEW** a new bottom stop across the zipper teeth (at the marking) with heavy thread and a whipstitch or several straight stitches.
3. **CUT OFF** the extra zipper, leaving about ½" of zipper tape below the stop.

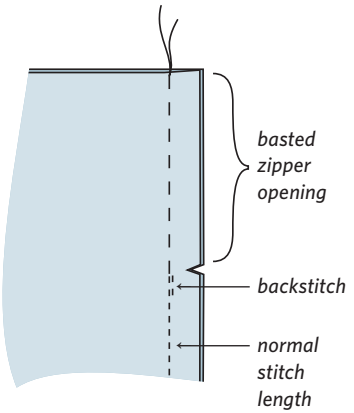
WARNING: Be sure to securely sew the new stop before cutting off the excess zipper tape, or you risk entirely losing the slider off the end of the zipper.



Installing a Centered Zipper

This is a good method for beginners to try first. A centered zipper is a popular choice for the center back of dresses and skirts.

1 **PREP THE SEAM.** Pin the zipper seam with the right sides together. Starting at the top, sew a basting stitch from the raw edge to the notch that marks the zipper end. Switch to a regular stitch length at the notch, backstitch, and finish stitching the seam. Press the seam open.

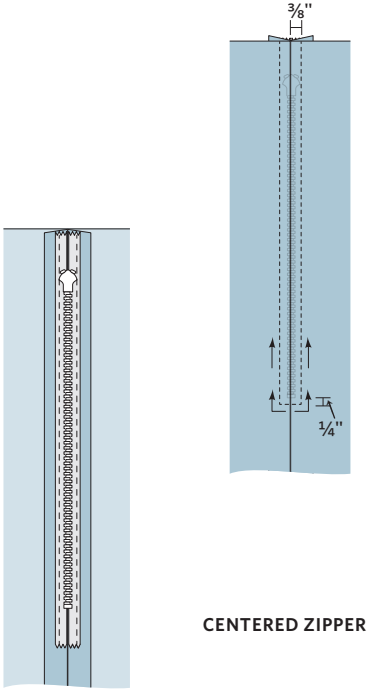


2 **BASTE THE ZIPPER.** Center the zipper teeth over the seamline of the basted seam allowance with the right side of the zipper facing down and pin it in place. Align the top edge of the tape with the top of the garment. Using your machine's zipper foot, which allows you to stitch close to the zipper teeth, baste the zipper tape to the seam allowance as shown. Baste the whole length of the zipper on both sides to hold it in place.

3 **MARK THE STITCHING GUIDELINES.** Turn the garment right side up with the zipper underneath. Use tailor's chalk and a ruler to draw stitch lines for the zipper ⅜" from the center back seam on both sides of the zipper opening. Draw a line across the bottom about ¼" below the zipper stop.

4 **TOPSTITCH THE ZIPPER IN PLACE.** Beginning at the bottom of the zipper at the seam, backstitch and then stitch to the corner, pivot, and stitch up along the zipper, following the chalk line. Backstitch at the top of the zipper. Repeat for the other side of the zipper.

5 **CAREFULLY RIP OUT THE BASTING STITCHES** and you're all set!



CENTERED ZIPPER

Installing an Invisible Zipper

Once you understand how to install a regular coiled zipper, the next step is learning how to install invisible zippers. You can apply any facing or lining after the zipper has been installed just as you would if the zipper was not there. Remember, you don't baste the seam closed before installing an invisible zipper.

1 **PREP THE ZIPPER.** Unzip the invisible zipper. Press the coils flat using an iron set at a medium cool heat. Don't worry, the coils won't melt!

2 **PREP THE SEAM.** Mark both sides of the zipper seam on the seam allowances with tailor's chalk as follows:

- Top of zipper: mark ½" down and ½" in from the seamline.
- Bottom of zipper: mark ½" in for the bottom stop of the zipper.

3 **PIN THE ZIPPER IN PLACE.** Pin or hand-baste the zipper to the seam allowance as follows. With the dress *right side up*, place the open zipper face down, so right sides are together as shown. The zipper coils should be ½" from the open edge, as marked.

4 **STITCH THE ZIPPER** with an invisible zipper foot installed on your machine. Line up the coils in the invisible zipper foot so that the needle falls close to the coils. The zipper foot will keep the needle the correct distance from the coils to prevent stitching too close to them,

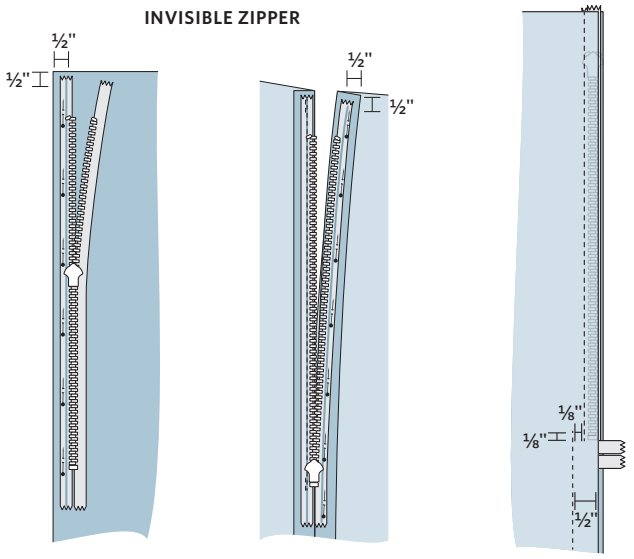
so the fabric doesn't get caught when you open and close the zipper.

- Starting from the top of the zipper ½" down from the edge, stitch down to the bottom of the zipper (to the zipper stop), backstitching at both ends of the seam.
- Repeat with the left side of the zipper, but this time the coils will be on the right side of the zipper foot.
- Close the zipper and make sure that the fabric from the dress does not get caught between the coils.

5 STITCH THE REST OF THE SEAM BELOW THE ZIPPER. Then, with the right sides together, press the end of the zipper tape to the right. With your invisible zipper foot to the left (so the needle is coming down to the right), stitch for about 1", starting ⅛" up and ⅛" to the left of the base of the zipper seam as shown. Then switch to your regular presser foot and finish the seam with a ⅝" seam allowance. Press the seam open.

Zipper Trap

If you close the zipper and your dress fabric gets caught in the teeth, don't panic. It just means you stitched too close to the coils. This is what a seam ripper is for. Simply rip out the entire length of the stitches and restitch, making sure that you are a little farther away from the coils.



STANDARD METRIC CONVERSION FORMULAS

To convert	multiply by	for metric measurement in
yards	0.9144	= meters (m)
yards	91.44	= centimeters (cm)
inches	2.54	= centimeters (cm)
inches	25.4	= millimeters (mm)
inches	0.0254	= meters (m)

STANDARD EQUIVALENTS

US measurement		Metric measurement
⅛ inch	=	3.2 mm
¼ inch	=	6.35 mm
⅜ inch	=	9.5 mm
½ inch	=	1.27 cm
⅝ inch	=	1.59 cm
¾ inch	=	1.91 cm
⅞ inch	=	2.22 cm
1 inch	=	2.54 cm

Acknowledgments

Wow, what a journey this has been. There are *sooo* many people who have helped me along the way and have made this possible. I really don't know how I could have done it without you all.

Firstly, thank you Storey for contacting me! I sent out the vibes to the Universe that I wanted to write a book in 2011. Then, shortly after I started my writing club, Scribber-Wribbers, I received an anonymous Facebook message from a "Deborah," with no Facebook profile image and zero friends in common. Who ever opens those? I am still not exactly sure what prompted me to even open the message from this anonymous, faceless Facebooker, but I am grateful I did. Thank you to my editor, Deborah Balmuth, for the opportunity.

Miriam Wentzel, my dedicated and hardworking intern, I really could not have done it without you. Like Deborah, she seemed to have appeared out of nowhere! We met at Dubai Fashion Week in 2007, when she was a student covering the shows. In 2011, after we had both moved to New York, she contacted me. Miriam wanted an internship with crazy me — crazy her! I said yes, obviously. With no experience in cutting, sewing, or design, Miriam quickly learned the tricks of the trade and fast became someone I trusted and relied on.

Another big thank-you to my content editors: Nancy Wood and Beth Baumgartel, who taught me so much during this process. You both helped me during some of my most challenging hours, going beyond your editing commitments and duties, acting as both patient mentor and friend. I am truly grateful for all I learned. To the whole team at Storey, the support and encouragement has been straight-up awesomeness.

Without my New York Angels this would not have been possible. Thank you for all my lovely friends and family for letting me sofa surf during those "New York Struggling Artist" periods: The McCollinses, the McCools, my cousins Amar and Lena Lalvani, and most importantly, Rory Hearse, who has constantly believed and encouraged me from day one and actually dressed me (how cold would New York be without all those hand-me-downs?!). I owe you all a great deal.

In the final stitches of the book, I cannot forget fashion designer and friend Sarah Hein, who traveled through rain, snow, and the messed-up subway system to remind me to breathe. In my small studio, with the pouring rain pushing its way down onto my humble skylight, we both completed the final few dresses just in time for deadline. I could not have done it without you, girl.

Mum, Pops, Lia . . . I hope this makes you proud, and I hope you make your own clothes now! Thank you, guys, for your constant support, encouragement, and love. I would not be here if it weren't for you.

WITH THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DESIGNERS AND RETAILERS

Chelsea evening bag, page 139, by Darling
Available at www.darlingclothes.com

Multistrand necklace, page 152, by Adia Kibur
Giant crystal drops, page 163, by Tai
Buckle bracelet, pages 86 and 93, by Bellissima
Multicolor enamel bracelet, pages 171 and 172, by Adia Kabur
Necklace, pages 126 and 132, by Wendy Mink
For information contact Yvette Fry, inc., at 212-730-5901

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stack of Italian resin square bangles, item P1031, page 92, PONO by Joan Goodman
Available at The Barnes Foundation Shop, 215-278-7400, or call 866-336-PONO for the nearest retailer

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Marie Python clutch, page 108, by Francoise Elizee
Available at www.francoiseelizee.com

---

pink now belt by Skinny, pages 102 and 108, by Jessica Elliot
Available at www.skinnystyle.com

Index

italic = illustrations

bold = chart

A

All Wrapped Up, 120–25
appliqué, 119, *119*
appliqué (fell) stitch, 179, *179*
armhole facings
  drafting, 55, *55*
  sewing, 184, *184*

B

Baking Babe, 87–91
beeswax, 26
Belle of the Ball, 164–69
Belt It!, 143
bias, *8*, 8–9, 57
  cutting facings on the bias, 54, 184
bias binding or tape
  finishing a neckline, 103
  finishing raw edges, 187, *187*
  how to attach, 181, *181*
  make your own, 180–81, *181*
  making piping, 74, *74*
  single-fold *vs.* double fold, 180
Blue Jeans to Princess Dreams, 176–77
bodice, lengthen or shorten, *48*, 48–49, *49*
body types, 30–33, *31–33*
border prints, cutting layout, 140, *140*
bust adjustments, 43–45
  increase or decrease circumference, 43–44, *44*
  move apex point of dart, 44, *44*
  move dart up or down, 45, *45*
buttons
  buttonhole foot, 25
  dresses with button plackets, 108, 132
  sew-through buttons, 182, *182*
  shank buttons, 182

C

Captain's Shirt Dress, The, 108–14
cardstock (for slopers), 18, 38–41
chart for adjusting specs, 42
chiffon, 12, 15
circle skirt
  drafting and cutting, 166, *166*
  square variation, 155–56, *156*
combination facings
  drafting 55, *55*
  sewing, 186, *186*
corduroy, 11–12, 25
cornered edges on pockets, 98, *98*
cotton and cotton lawn, 11–14
crosswise
  cutting layout fold, 59, *59*
  grain, *8*, 8–9
custom-made bias tape, 181, *181*
customizing a sloper, 41–42
  chart for adjusting specs, **42**
cutting out a pattern
  from fabric, 60–61, *61*
  lengthwise vs. crosswise fold, 59, *59*

D

darts
  closing a dart on pattern paper, 45
  notching a pattern, 57
  sewing bust darts, 183, *183*
  sewing waist darts, 183, *183*
  transferring darts from pattern to fabric, 61, *61*
denim, 13–14, 25, 176–77
dress forms, 18, 52, *52*
  making a custom dress form, 20
dressmaker's ham, 22–23
dressmaker's pins, 18–19, 22–23

E

Enchanted Evening, 160–62
eyelet, 13–14, 127

F

fabric, 8–17
  everyday fabrics, 11–14
  everyday fibers, 11
  fun fabrics, 15–17
  mixing and matching, 16–17
  warp and weft, *8*, 8–10
  woven, 8–9
  yardage conversion chart, **15**
facings, drafting
  combination facings, 55, *55*
  separate armhole facings, 55
  separate neckline facings, 54, *54*
  shaped neckline for raglan sleeves, 55, *55*
facings, preparing, 184
facings, sewing
  combination facings, 186, *186*
  facts about facings, 185
  separate armhole and neckline facings, 184, *184*
  separate neckline with center opening, 185, *185*
fell or appliqué stitch, 179, *179*
finishing raw edges, 187–88, *187–88*
First Impressions, 149–51
Flirty Flare, 144–47
Flower Power, 163
French curve, 21, 41
French seams, 187, *187*

G

Garden Goddess, 81–85
gingham, 13–14
grading slopers, 43–51
  bodice length, *48*, 48–49, *49*
  bust adjustments, 43–45, *44–45*
  hip adjustments, 47, *47*
  sleeve adjustments, 49–51, *51*
  waist adjustments, 46

grainline, *8*, 8–9
arrows on a pattern, 57
straightening the grain, 10

H

hand stitches, basic, 179, *179*
hand-sewing needles, 22
hand-tack, 179, *179*
hem allowance, 56
making a double-fold hem, 188, *188*
notching a pattern, 58
hem gauge, 26–27
hip adjustments, increase or decrease, 47, *47*

I

interfacing, 22–24
iron and ironing board, 24

J

Jump Around, 93–99

L

labeling finished patterns, 56
lace, 12, 15
Lacy Days, 69
lengthwise
cutting layout fold, 59, *59*
grain, *8*, 8–9
linens, 11
loop turner, 27–28

M

machine stitches, basic, 180, *180*
matching seams and pattern pieces, 56, 58
measurements, 34–37
how to measure correctly, 34
My Measurements, 37, *37*
size chart, **34**
metallic fabric, 17
Mini-Break Basic, 103–5
muslin
fabric, 18–20
making a muslin, *52*, 52–53
My Measurements, **37**, *37*

N

neckline facings
drafting, 54, *54*
sewing, 184–85, *184–85*
no pointed seams, 95, *95*
notches
pattern notcher, 19–20, 57, 61
transferring from pattern to fabric, 61, *61*
where to notch pattern, 57–58

O

ombré, 131
Outdoorsy Appliqué, 119
overlock stitch, 188, *188*

P

patternmaking, 29, 53–58
basic steps, 38
cutting on the fold, 57, *57*
draft facings, 54–55, *54–55*
grainline arrows, 57, *57*
labeling the pattern pieces, 56
notches, where to place, 57–58
seam and hem allowance, 56
patternmaking tools, 18–21
mechanical and colored pencils, 20–21
pattern notcher, 19–20, 57, 61
pattern paper, 19–20
rulers, 19, 21
tailor's chalk, 19, 21
tracing paper and wheel, 19, 21
Peep Show, 127–130
pincushion or magnetic bowl, 23–24, 26
pinking shears, 27–28
pinked edge, 188, *188*
pinning skirt to bodice, 156
pipings
make your own, 74
Piping Hot!, 70–75
Pitcher Perfect, 116–18
placket facing, 54, 109, *109*, 113, *113*, 133, *133*, 135, *135*
plain weave, 9
pleats and gathers, notching, 58
pockets
cornered edges, 98, *98*
drafting (jumper), 94, *94*
preparing facings, 184
press cloth, 23–24
Princess Perfect, 139–42
princess seam with raglan sleeve variations, 148–58
First Impressions, 149–51
Ruffle and Ready, 152
Sweetheart Sundress, 153–58
princess seam with set-in sleeve variations, 138–47
Belt It!, 143
Flirty Flare, 144–47
Princess Perfect, 139–42
princess seam, strapless, 159–69
Belle of the Ball, 164–69
Enchanted Evening, 160–62
Flower Power, 163

R

Raglan and Scones, 77–79
raglan sleeves, drafting
adjust circumference, 50–51, *51*
adjust to match dress, 51
raglan sleeves, sewing
preparing and attaching, 190–91, *190–91*
shaped neckline facing, 55, *55*
raw edges, finishing, 187–88, *187–88*
rotary cutter, 28
Ruffle and Ready, 152

S

sailor collar, 106–7, *107*
satin, 8, 16, 144, 160, 164
satin weave, 9–10
scissors and shears, 20, 22–23, 26–27
seam allowance, 56
notching a pattern, 58
seam ripper, 23–24
selvage, *8*, 8–10
serger, 25, 114, 188
set-in sleeve, sewing
preparing the sleeve, 189–90, *189–90*
sewing flat construction, 190, *190*
sewing in the round, 190, *190*
set-in sleeves
adjust cap height, 50
adjust circumference, 50–51, *51*
adjust length, 50
attaching, 68, *68*
notching a pattern, 58
sew-through buttons, attaching, 182, *182*

sewing machine and needles, 24–25
sewing machine stitches, 180, *180*
sewing tools, 22–28
  dressmaker's ham, 22–23
  dressmaker's pins, 22–23
  fabric shears, 22–23
  hand-sewing needles, 22
  interfacing, 22–24
  iron and ironing board, 24
  loop turner, 27–28
  pinking shears, 27–28
  press cloth, 23–24
  rotary cutter, 28
  seam ripper, 23–24
  sleeve board, 27–28
  thimble, 27–28
shank buttons, attaching, 182
Shape Shifter, 172–73
sheath dress with raglan sleeves, 115–125
  All Wrapped Up, 120–25
  Outdoorsy Appliqué, 119
  Pitcher Perfect, 116–18
sheath dress with set-in sleeve variations, 102–14
  Captain's Shirt Dress, The, 108–14
  Mini-Break Basic, 103–5
  Tinker, Tailor, Sew a Sailor, 106–7
sheath dress with strapless variations, 126–35
  Peep Show, 127–130
  Sunday-Best Button Dress, 132–35
  Sunset Strip, 131
Shift and Shout, 65–68
shift dress with raglan sleeves, 76–85
  Garden Goddess, 81–85
  Raglan and Scones, 77–79
  Stencil Me In, 80
shift dress with set-in sleeves, 64–75
  Lacy Days, 69
  Piping Hot, 70–75
  Shift and Shout, 65–68
shift dress, sleeveless, 86–99
  Baking Babe, 87–91
  Jump Around, 93–99
  Stud Muffin, 92
silk, 13, 160
size chart, **34**
sleeve adjustments, drafting, 49–51
  adjust raglan sleeve to match dress, 51
  set-in sleeve length, 50
  set-in sleeve, cap height, 50
  sleeve circumference, 50–51, *51*
sleeve board, 27–28
sleeves, sewing
  raglan sleeves, 190–91, *190–91*
  set-in sleeve, 189–90, *189–90*
slipstitch, 179, 179
slopers, 29, 38–51
  customizing to fit, 41–42
  defined, 38
  grading, 43–51
  tracing the slopers provided, 39–40
spaghetti straps, 28, 153–58, 192
square skirt
  circle variation, 166, *166*
  how to layout and cut, 155–56, *156*
squaring off pointed pattern pieces, 95, *95*
staystitch, 180
Stencil Me In, 80
stitch-in-the-ditch, 181, *181*
straightening the grain, 10
straps, how to make, 192
striped fabric, 17
Stud Muffin, 92
Sunday-Best Button Dress, 132–35
Sunset Strip, 131
Sweetheart Sundress, 153–58
synthetic fibers, 11

T

taffeta, 13, 16, 163
tailor's chalk, 19, 21
tape, 19, 21
thimble, 27–28
thread, 26
Tinker, Tailor, Sew a Sailor, 106–7
tools
  patternmaking, 18–21
  sewing essentials, 22–26
  useful extras, 26–28
topstitch, 180
tracing paper and wheel, 19, 21
tracing tips, 40
tracing the slopers provided, 39–40, *40*
tulle, 13, 16
twill weave, 9

U

understitch, 180, *180*

V

vary form curve, 19, 21, 71
Vintage Men's Shirt, 174–75
vintage transformation, 170–77
  Blue Jeans to Princess Dreams, 176–77
  Shape Shifter, 172–73
  Vintage Men's Shirt, 174–75
voile, 13–14, 24

W

waist line
  increase or decrease, 46, *46*
  notching a pattern, 58
warp and weft, *8*, 8–10
whipstitch, 179, *179*
woven fabric, types of, 9

Y

yardage guide, 15

Z

zigzag stitch, 144, 188, 188
zippers
  anatomy of a zipper, 193
  cutting a zipper to size, 193, *193*
  installing a centered zipper, 194, *194*
  installing an invisible zipper, 194–95, *195*
  notching placement on a pattern, 58

SLOPER PIECES

from BUFFI'S DRESS DESIGN: 30 SEW FUN STYLES

HOW TO PRINT AND ASSEMBLE A SLOPER PDF (see next page)

To print all of the slopers, go to **http://whol.st/slopers-all**. To print individual slopers, select from and click on the items in the list below.

Sleeves

RAGLAN SLEEVES

SET-IN SLEEVES

The Shift Dress

SHIFT, FRONT BOTTOM

SHIFT, BACK BOTTOM

SHIFT, FRONT & BACK TOP, RAGLAN

SHIFT, FRONT & BACK TOP, SET-IN & SLEEVELESS

The Sheath Dress

SHEATH, FRONT BOTTOM

SHEATH, BACK BOTTOM

SHEATH, FRONT & BACK TOP, RAGLAN

SHEATH, FRONT & BACK TOP, SET-IN & SLEEVELESS

The Princess Seam Dress

PRINCESS SEAM, CENTER FRONT

PRINCESS SEAM, CENTER BACK

PRINCESS SEAM, SIDE FRONT BOTTOM

PRINCESS SEAM, SIDE BACK BOTTOM

PRINCESS SEAM, SIDE FRONT & BACK TOP, RAGLAN

PRINCESS SEAM, SIDE FRONT & BACK TOP, SET-IN & SLEEVELESS

Sloper Pieces

A sloper is a basic pattern template that represents the shape and size of your body. It is used as the starting point for making garments with consistent fit. Learn more about slopers in Chapter 2 of ***Buffi's Dress Design: 30 Sew Fun Styles***.

HOW TO PRINT AND ASSEMBLE A SLOPER PDF

Instructions

1. Download your selected sloper(s).
2. Open the PDF(s) with the latest version of Adobe Reader.
3. Print on 8½ x 11" paper at 100%. Do not scale or fit any of the pages. You must print the document at actual size (see the test square to ensure your printer is accurate). Each sloper will print on multiple pages that you will tile and tape together.
4. Examine the sloper pages. The first page of each PDF shows a mini overview of the whole sloper (with the page divisions shown in gray lines). Uppercase letters identify each page.
5. Cut off or fold on the margins all the printed pages along the gray lines.
6. Lay out the pages on a large, flat surface or on the floor using the overview page as a guide, and line up the diamond symbols along the page edges.
7. Tape the pages together tightly along the edges once you have confirmed they are in the correct order.
8. Trim off all the excess paper along the outer black border of the fully assembled sloper. Refer to chapter 2 for instructions on customizing and using your sloper.

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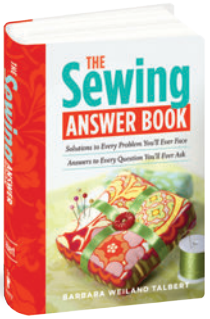

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